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THAT NIGHT AND OTHER SATIRES

FREEMAN TILDEN

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THAT NIGHT
AND OTHER SATIRES

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was wrapped up in Futurism.

(Artistic Temperament)

THAT NIGHT

AND OTHER SATIRES

BY

FREEMAN TILDEN

New York
Hearst's International Library Co.
1915

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THAT NIGHT
AND OTHER SATIRES

THAT NIGHT

SHE was due at the Grand Central station at three twelve.

Livingston had cultivated regularity. Particularly was he regular as to trains. He seldom missed the eight five at Irmadale in the morning. If he did not catch the five o'clock train for Irmadale at night, it meant that he was detained by business. Seven minutes was the time he allowed for shaving; for breakfast, precisely fifteen.

At exactly three ten Livingston reached the spot in the station where the arrival of trains is announced and chalked on a blackboard.

"Will arrive on track twenty-six," he heard, and took his place, like all obedient New Yorkers, with the crowd in the area opposite track twenty-six. At the tick of the clock the iron doors slid back. Another second, and a clean-cut traveling salesman shot through the gate as though he had been catapulted from the front of the engine. It seemed incredible that any human being could come and disappear so quickly.

N Y P L

Then the stream began to pour through the gates, to divide and trickle away into the million corners of the city. Unattached men first; and a few unencumbered, businesslike women in flat, wide shoes. These were the pacemakers. Nobody was waiting for them.

After these came the first contingent of heavy infantry, staggering along under full complements of suit-cases and packages; dusty, train tired, stiff in the joints. Second contingent of heavy infantry after them: fathers, mothers and families, hurrying without necessity, and out of sheer habit. Among these a body of Italian and Greek immigrant toilers, bearing tawdry shut-overs and bedclothes wrapped in greasy paper and blue striped drill.

And then the fortunate ones, the Pullman car voyagers, legitimate prey of the red-capped negro porters. Tolerably clean, well dusted, fresher looking than the rest, they had taxicabs in view, and had dined at ease on the train, and were approaching the city with the serenity that only plenty of money in pocket can give.

Among these last was Eleanor Livingston.

They saw each other at the same moment. Livingston, with the easy confidence of a suc-

cessful business man, trespassed on the forbidden space to greet her.

It is strictly within the proprieties to kiss one's wife or husband on such occasions. They kissed. She said, "Bob!" He said, "Eleanor!" A negro porter at her side waited for instructions.

"Taxi," ordered Livingston. Then he remarked to his wife, "We can just make the three thirty-one at the Pennsylvania terminal."

"Let's go into the waiting-room a few minutes, Bob," she said. "I want to sit down and rest."

They went into the next giant cavern of the station. The porter was liberally tipped and dismissed. They looked at each other with affectionate curiosity a moment. Then she asked, with a little maternal catch in her voice, "The children?"

"Fine."

"Everything?"

"Fine."

"You?"

"Also."

"Do you like me?"

He understood what she meant. She was referring to her appearance. "Stunning," he replied with a gratified smile.

Indeed, she was worth a second and a third glance. By that incredible magic that she had inherited, perhaps, from her French maternal ancestors, she had managed to come through a six hour railroad journey looking fresh as a new-cut and refrigerated rose. Her light gray traveling suit was spotless. She had successfully tempted fate with a snow-white waist, and on a railroad that was not renowned for its use of anthracite, either. The bloom in her cheeks was partly a gift of health, and partly the result of three weeks in the open country, up North. Only one man in the big waiting-room could have realized that she was eight years married and the mother of two children. Others would have murmured something about "looking like a schoolgirl."

"Stunning!" said Livingston.

For reply, she took his hand and squeezed it. "Bob, I'd like to be kissed," she whispered.

"I did kiss you," he replied, with all the proper remonstrance of a man who had neglected no such convention.

"Oh, that! Yes. But that was for the public. I mean a *kiss*. Do you think we two could squeeze into one of those telephone booths?"

Livingston laughed softly. The idea struck him as decidedly humorous. Two well-bred married persons squeezing into a telephone booth for the purpose of kissing! "When we get home . . ." he suggested.

She might have reminded him that certain pleasures do not bear postponement. But she didn't. Instead, she nestled closer to his shoulder and breathed a kiss at his neck.

"The next train," said Livingston, "is the four seven. We ought to get that. The Fergusons are coming over for dinner. I told them you'd be here this afternoon."

"And there will be auction," she said, sighing.

"I suppose so."

"And Mr. Ferguson will tell us again about that wonderful hand he held at the Yacht Club last fall."

"Ferguson isn't such a bad sort," he replied, smiling. "He takes the game very seriously."

"And Dolly Ferguson is going to tell us about the trouble in her brother-in-law's family. There must be a whole lot of news accumulated about them in three whole weeks."

The man laughed. "They are awful bores at times," he assented. "Still, you know we can't very well—"

"Come with me, Bob," she interrupted. "I want to send a telegram to Aunt Lucy."

They went to the telegraph booth, and he read the time-table of the Long Island Railroad while she wrote. When he saw the message he gasped.

"Unavoidably detained. Let the Fergusons know."

He repeated the words aloud. "But why, dear? What's going to detain us?"

"Please send it," she said.

"But I don't see—"

"Please send it," she repeated.

He did so, demurring. "Now please let me see your time-table, Bob."

He passed it to her silently, and she tore it twice across and threw it in a waste-basket. "We don't need it, Bob," she explained. "We both know all those trains by heart." And she repeated gayly: "Four seven; four thirty-one; five express; five seven; five thirty-one express . . ."

For the first time he grumbled outright. "I

should think you'd want to see the children," he said.

"I'm just crazy to see them," was the reply. "But now I know they're well and safe, I can make myself wait. Will you have the transfer company send out my suit-case, Bob?"

The man of regular habits grumbled inquiringly. She put her arm under his and cooed scandalously. "Don't you think we could manage to squeeze into a telephone booth?" she whispered again.

"Don't be silly," he replied. But the suit-case was turned over to the forwarding agents.

They stood now in the great, beautiful hall of the station with its majestic arched sky over their heads. The architect, in planning all this beauty, must have had in mind that it would give pleasure to a few country visitors, to fellow artists, and to the poor bedraggled loafers who stray in from the streets for shelter on cold and stormy days. Nobody else ever pauses to see it.

"Well, what are you going to do, little girl?" said Livingston, as patiently as possible.

"I don't know," she answered.

"Well, I certainly don't," he added.

"But why should we do anything?" she asked.

"People usually do something," he replied, in a mildly sarcastic tone. "Especially after they send rush telegrams and check their suit-cases."

"We can't go home, can we?"

"No fear of that. The telegram's gone, and the Fergusons would think—"

"Exactly. And we've no place to go to, have we, Bob?"

"We might have dinner at Proctor's and then go to the theater," he offered, as a charitable and magnanimous suggestion to help her out of a bad predicament.

"I shouldn't care to go to a theater; and I wasn't even thinking of dinner."

That was too much for the man of regular habits. He felt that the time had come when, in spite of his admiration and affection for this little woman with her attractive, girlish figure, he must assert himself in behalf of all propriety and regularity.

"Eleanor," he said with mannerly severity, "I don't know why you had me send that telegram. I suppose you know. I hope you do. I don't know why you won't want to go out home—to our home. I am waiting to hear the reason. You wanted your suit-case checked. I checked

it. I haven't the least idea why. We're standing, like two simpletons, in the middle of the Grand Central station, talking about nothing and doing nothing. What is it all about?"

The two dark eyes under the roguish little bonnet sparkled with tenderness and vivacity. She came close to the big, smartly dressed man in front of her and took both his hands. It brought the color to his cheeks. He could see ten thousand pairs of eyes focused on them. He could see photographers for the morning papers snap-shotting them in this ridiculous attitude.

"Bob," she said, "I had you send the telegram because I love you. I don't want to go out home to-night—because I love you. I even had the suit-case checked because I love you. I love you so much that I want to stand right here and tell every man and woman about it as they come along. I'd like to rush over to that nice looking old gentleman over there and catch him by the sleeve and say, 'See that big, good-looking man standing out in the middle of the floor? I love him.'"

Livingston winced. He felt a cold shiver go down his spine at the thought of it. But she continued, resolutely clinging to his hands:

"Bob Livingston, we may never have another chance like this. You're a free man for to-night. You don't have to go home to your wife. There is a woman here, holding your hands, who doesn't have to go home to her husband. All the delightful deviltry of a thousand years is wrapped up in that situation, Bob. If you love me, here's your chance—and mine. I'll go anywhere with you. I don't care what happens to me. I don't care what anybody says afterward. Pick me up and carry me away somewhere. Let's elope!"

She let go his hands, and they fell limply at his sides. He was dazed for a minute. He felt that she was very much in earnest, but he couldn't see just why or how. Finally he forced a smile and said:

"That's great! Elope—with my own wife!"

She made a captivating grimace in imitation of displeasure.

"Oh, of course," she said, "if you've some one else in mind that would suit you better—"

"Don't!" he replied. "That isn't a nice idea, and it isn't true. I'll run away with you. Anywhere you say. But, in heaven's name, what and whom are we running away from, dear?"

"From tyrants, Bob," she answered quickly. "From the tyranny of time-tables and trains, and Aunt Lucy and neighbors, and what people think and what people say, and—yes—from ourselves."

"I—"

"Don't quite see it? You will see it, Bob. Have you lots of money with you?"

"I'm afraid I haven't much," replied Livingston. "I didn't think I'd need much this evening, or I could have—"

"It would be stupid to elope with a wealthy man," she interrupted. "There wouldn't be the least excitement in it. How poor are you, dear?"

"Oh, I suppose I have about twenty dollars."

"Heavens! we never could use all that in one elopement, Bob. That ought to be enough to provide for a number of eloping couples. I'm sorry you have so much. I was hoping—" She caught her breath.

"You were hoping?"

"It's really quite silly," she continued, "but I was hoping that, some way or other, you'd be quite without cash. I did so want to pawn my ring. That would be romance."

"We are still in the Grand Central station,"

said Livingston, looking up at the clock. "Where shall we go?"

"Out in the big world, where nobody knows us, Bob," she said. "I want to be alone with you, and the only place we can be alone is in the crowd, isn't it? Do I look all confused, dear, as though I were just going to do something naughty? Please say yes."

Very suddenly, and without warning, it was half past eleven.

The waiters in the little Italian table d'hôte were furtively stalking in the back of the room. Once in a while one of them would meander down to the tables where a few couples lingered, and pantomime the suggestion that waiters have homes. The tablecloths were stained with red splotches, and geometrical designs done by those diners who talk better when they draw.

It was one of the "red ink" places to which Livingston had often so contemptuously referred.

But this one, Livingston agreed to-night, was vastly different. He wondered why they had never discovered it before. The people here seemed genuine. The food was rarely good. There was something about it—he couldn't ex-

plain, he said, but it was—well, different. What did "she" think?

She could have explained the difference, but she didn't care to. She was happy. She closed her eyes luxuriously. When she opened them, they were still full of dreams. She leaned forward with one elbow on the table, quite close to his elbow, which was on the table, and their faces were near. She said softly:

"Do you remember—"

"Yes," he answered quickly.

Nothing could have pleased her more than that sudden affirmative. Nothing could have pleased any woman more. There are times when women despair of a man's capacity to remember those important unimportant things.

"It was at one of these places," she continued. "How many days before we were married? No; I won't insist on your remembering that, dear. That would be too much. It was just eleven days. But you do remember what I want you to remember! It was nearly twelve o'clock. The last train out to our house was at twelve thirty-five. There was always that last train, wasn't there? But that night, that night—I didn't want to go."

"Nor I," he said.

"It was so much like getting up in the middle of the play and walking out of the theater," she added.

Livingston nodded. "I know."

"But we were very good," she continued. "We were entirely good."

He looked at her curiously.

She drew her face even nearer to his. "Do you know the frightfully naughty idea that was in my head that night?" she said. "I wanted you to hire a hansom. I wanted to drive through the streets, through the park, everywhere, on and on . . ."

"I believe I had some such idea myself," he said, laughing softly. "But—well, we didn't."

"No, we didn't," she agreed. "We were very good." There was a little red wine, considerably weakened by the melting of a bit of ice, remaining in her glass. She raised it to her lips. "That night," she said, as she drank. Then she rose and took her coat from the back of the chair. "Hire a hansom, Bobby. An old-fashioned, out of date hansom. We must ride over that neglected course."

And then, uncompromising Time declared that it was one o'clock.

They had left the carriage some time before. They were sitting on a bench near the lower gate in Central Park. A tree with low drooping branches cast a shadow around them, a little darker than the surrounding dark. They were quite alone. There had been one or two vague, whispering specters on other benches when they came, but these had gone. The park lamps were soft, unintrusive. There were other modestly glowing eyes, here and there above the tree tops on the Fifth Avenue side. And a dull hum of motor cars sweeping around the Circle at Fifty-ninth street. Once in a long time a car sped by within a few feet of them, leaving a wake of giddy laughter and a puff of the odor from a good cigar. But they felt quite alone.

It was the last week in September. The day had been warmish; now there was a reviving zest in the air, and a little breeze that whisked a few early fallen leaves along the path and curled them about their feet. She nestled close, laying her head on his shoulder. "What are you thinking of?" she asked, as she had asked many times.

"To tell the truth?"

"Of course."

"That these small hats are better than the big flaring kind women used to wear," he replied. "You never could have got so close then."

"Silly!" she said. "Is that all you were thinking of?"

"Well, just at that moment," he explained apologetically. "Of course, I thought other things. But nothing very important, I'm afraid. —What were you thinking of?"

"I'm too happy and 'cuddly' to think," she whispered. He kissed her for reply.

A big form suddenly reared itself before them, and a throaty voice said, "Do you know what time it is, young people?"

Instinctively the man and woman drew apart and sat upright. Then, annoyed at his own fast beating heart, Livingston answered rather crossly, "I don't know. Why? What about it?"

The policeman inclined his head and peered at them. They could see his face better than he could see theirs. It looked like a good-natured face. The voice was that of a man with an unpleasant duty to perform.

"Don't get fresh, young feller," he cautioned. "It's getting near two o'clock. I guess the young lady's folks will be wanting her home. I don't like to break up a party. But I've got orders. Run along now, and come back to-morrow night."

Livingston felt indignant. He heard a choking sound from the bench and his first thought was that Eleanor was sobbing. "Let me tell you, sir," he remonstrated in his best office tone, "this lady is my wife."

"Well of all the nerve! Can—you—beat—that?" was the scoffing reply.

"I tell you this lady is my wife," repeated the conventional and outraged Livingston, disregarding a pleading pull at his coat from behind.

The answer was a laugh. "If I had your nerve, son, I'd play poker for a living. G'wan with you! Didn't I see you with your arm around her? Didn't I see you glued together —say, what you take me for? You think I just came out of the Working Boys' Home?—I'll be back this way in five minutes, and I want to see an empty bench. Get me?"

The big form passed along, swinging his nightstick.

"I really believe you're angry," she said, with a merry giggle. "I thought it was so sweet of him. I thought I should burst right out laughing in his face."

"It is getting late, that's a fact. Maybe he was right, after all," acknowledged Livingston. "But it seems pretty hard when a man can't—"

"Don't say it," she interrupted. "You'll spoil it all. We must go along, though, mustn't we? It's time even the naughty birds were in their nests. We haven't time to build one, Bob, so you'll have to hire one."

At the park entrance Livingston suddenly stopped. "We've nothing," he said. "Absolutely nothing. Not even a—tooth-brush."

"Adam and Eve had nothing," she replied, "absolutely nothing—not even a—tooth-brush. *Marchons!*"

"Really, dear, it's ridiculous," he persisted.

"Isn't it, though? I love it," she answered.

A predatory night taxi swooped down upon them, and they fled in it.

Livingston had a peculiarly embarrassed sensation as he entered the hotel. As commuters,

he and Eleanor had had nothing whatever to do with New York hotels, except as to their restaurants. Whenever they found it necessary to remain in the city over night, they had plenty of friends.

He was very innocent, but somehow he felt strange. He hoped that Eleanor would have the good sense to remain somewhere out of sight, but he could scarcely tell her to do so. He was conscious of perspiration on his forehead. He passed a mirror on his way to the desk, and he fancied he looked a bit disheveled. Finally, he was alarmed to hear himself saying, in a forced calm voice that rang false, "I want to get a room for the night."

The big room was nearly empty, and the words echoed horribly.

"Yes, sir," replied the night clerk, taking up a pen and professionally dipping it. "You are alone?"

It seemed such a brutal way to put the question! If the clerk could only have framed the matter with a little more tact! Livingston felt an impulse to ask the clerk to step aside with him for a confidential talk, but of course that wouldn't do. So he replied:

"Myself and wife."

These words echoed abominably, though he spoke in a subdued tone. And they sounded strange and absurd even to Livingston himself. "Myself and wife."

The clerk eyed Livingston appraisingly. Livingston felt it. Then came the fatal question: "You have luggage?"

Livingston felt that his cheeks were red. This was awful! His lips were parched. He shook his head and was audible to the slight extent of a bare negative.

"Perhaps your trunks are at the railroad station," suggested the clerk politely.

The man in front of the desk straightened up. Why hadn't he thought of that? It had never occurred to him, and it was so simple, too! What a simpleton!

"Yes," he lied, "we just got in, and the trunks hadn't come. At least they couldn't find them; and we couldn't wait around, you know. So we came right along—" He reached for the pen and cursed himself inwardly that his hand trembled.

"Oh, that's all right," said the clerk. "Just let me see the baggage checks!"

Livingston was bereft of ordinary intelligence for the moment. "Baggage checks!" he repeated stupidly. "Baggage checks! Oh, yes." And he began to feel in his waistcoat pockets for certain articles that had no possible existence. Meanwhile he murmured pitiably, "Baggage checks; oh, yes, of course; baggage checks."

The clerk was a decent fellow. He curbed a natural tendency to prolong the farce and leaned over and spoke confidentially:

"I know you haven't any checks, old chap," he said. "Don't bother to look for them. I know how it is. I'm mighty sorry I can't accommodate you here. But this house is very strict. We have to be, you know—middle-class people, family hotel—all that sort of thing. Mind now, I'm no prude. I think you're all right; you look good to me. I'll give you the address of a place where they're not particular—"

Livingston choked. He was humiliated out of all reason. The cool, impertinent assurance of the clerk wounded his pride more than a rebuke could have done. He gasped: "This lady is my wife. I won't permit—"

He was not even conscious of the humorous fact that a few minutes before he had been say-

ing the same words to a policeman in Central Park.

A cynical smile played around the lips of the hotel clerk. Livingston saw it, and it infuriated him. He clenched his fists, and in another moment there would have been a scene. But he chanced to look around quickly, and he saw Eleanor standing near the door. A fortunate reversion to common sense saved him. The possibility of the police, of newspaper men, of frightful notoriety rose up before him. He turned and walked away without a word.

Eleanor looked at him inquiringly as he came toward her. "What's the matter?" she whispered.

For reply he forced her through the doorway in front of him. Without a word he stalked along the sidewalk, she clinging to him in a half frightened way.

"What is the matter, Bobby?" she persisted.

"All the rooms taken, hotel's full," he replied savagely.

It was only too evident that he had manufactured the answer under stress. But she said simply, "Well, there are plenty of others, dear."

"No," he burst out bitterly. "I just told you

a lie. The hotel isn't full. They—they wouldn't let us—oh, damn it—this is awful!"

"They wouldn't let us—" she repeated.

"If you must know," he blurted out, "they refused to let me have a room. They think—I came near punching that confounded leering puppy's head—he said he'd give me the address of place where they weren't particular—"

"Oh, isn't it wonderful, Bobby?" she laughed gleefully, squeezing his arm.

He stopped short and looked at her in utter astonishment. "Eh? Wonderful? What do you mean. Isn't what wonderful?"

"They think—we're quite off color. Don't they? Isn't that the dearest thing ever? I'm just so excited I don't know what to do. Please let's try another hotel, and see if they won't—"

"Not for a thousand dollars!" he exclaimed fervently. "Go through that again! I should say not! Wonderful! I'm glad you see something wonderful in it. To be suspected—"

"What is the address of the place where they aren't a bit particular?" she interrupted.

"I didn't wait to hear," was the gloomy reply.

"Oh, my dear boy, you must go right back and get it. You know we must go somewhere."

He didn't seem to hear. He was looking up at the big hotel. "Just a suit-case would have been enough," he muttered. "Nothing but a suit-case—or even a hand bag—between us and respectability—and we haven't got one!"

"You aren't angry with me for sending mine out home, are you, dear?"

He bit his lip to keep back the truth. "Of course, you didn't realize," he replied.

There was a long silence. Even at this hour Broadway was still peopled; and those who passed gave them curious, knowing glances.

"We could ring up somebody we know, I suppose," he said finally.

"Everybody we know is sound asleep," was the answer. "You know we couldn't possibly do that."

Livingston rubbed his chin reflectively. "A nice situation," he said. "What on earth can we do?"

"I don't see anything except going back and asking the hotel clerk the address of that—unparticular place," she replied.

"Ugh!"

"I'm beginning to feel the least bit cold," said Eleanor with a shiver.

"I'll do it!" Livingston said suddenly. "We must go somewhere. I don't know as he'll tell me now, though. I spoke to him pretty roughly. Still he seemed like a rather decent fellow, come to think of it. You don't mind waiting just outside, do you, dear? It gives me such an idiotic feeling—"

The hotel clerk saw Livingston coming and greeted him with a grin. "Found the baggage checks?" he asked.

Livingston leaned over the desk and whispered in a voice that was meant to be contrite, "I didn't have any. You were right."

"Was that your wife?" persisted the clerk with good-natured cruelty.

"No," replied Livingston, with a lump in his throat.

"Why the dickens did you want to get so frothy then? I meant to do you a good turn. You came back after that address, didn't you?"

Livingston nodded.

The clerk wrote on a card and handed it to the other man. "About three minutes' walk," he said. "I'm sorry I can't put you up. Not at all; not at all; glad to help you out. Only, remember it pays to tell the truth."

"I see it does," replied Livingston.

The room was tawdry, ill-furnished, dilapidated. But somehow it looked good to them. It had one window, and beside it, on the floor, was a big coil of rope, unpleasantly conveying a suggestion that there was no fire escape. One poor chromo, in a broken frame, was stuck askew over the bed. Ten thousand matches had been scratched on the wall-paper near the chiffonier, and the edges of the top of that dubious piece of furniture were ringed with cigarette burns. The pitcher on the wash-stand had a broken nose and no handle. But the bed linen was clean. Instinctively they both sighed with relief when they saw that.

"What a dirty, delightful nest!" said Eleanor.

"Horribly comfortable." replied the man, with a laugh. He had become cheerful again. He was relieved. It was over with. They were safe for the night; and the Fergusons couldn't walk in on them. The Fergusons! He laughed again, as he thought of them. And suddenly, laughing at the idea of what the Fergusons would think and what the Fergusons would say, he jumped up from the rickety chair where he had been viewing the surroundings and took her

in his arms. He kissed her and then held her out from him at arm's length. "Do you know, little girl," he said, "I believe I rather like this. It's different."

"You're quite happy?" she whispered.

He nodded. She said: "So am I. Frightfully."

Then she took his hands in her own fine white hands and looked into his eyes. "Bobby, dear, this is 'that night.' Do you know what I mean? This is the night that everybody dreams about, sometime, somewhere, happening. It's the naughty, happy night that never should be, but sometimes you just have to think of. You do all the things you mustn't do, all the things that good people don't do. You're terribly bad. It's the thing you mustn't speak about to anybody; or if you do, you make them promise they will never tell. It's the night you think about, Bobby dear, when you're very young; and if you're a girl, you know you ought to be ashamed—and even if you're not ashamed, you're afraid—and then you get married—and that's different.

"Coming down on the train, dear, I got to thinking—of things; and all at once I saw some-

thing I'd never seen before. 'That night' is only for people that really love, Bobby, and the only way to find out whether you really love, is to be married. And so, you see, it's the married people who ought to run away together once in a while—with each other. And so I thought—am I talking awful nonsense, Bobby?"

"Absolute rot," he laughed, drawing her close to him and holding her tightly. "Absolute rot. Do you know what time it's getting to be?"

"I don't know anything," she answered, clinging. "Except that I have eloped with the man I love—and I am very happy—and—and—"

She stopped short and drew back from him slightly. Then she whispered quickly, "What was that?"

They listened. Through the open window came a cry, the cry that no mother has ever heard without a little seizure at the heart—the cry of an ailing child at night.

Instinctively they both went to the window and pulled aside the curtain. There was a light nearly opposite. A shadow moved across the curtain before their eyes.

The child's cry came to them again; fainter and more pitiable.

She turned swiftly and seized her husband's hands. "Bob!" she cried hoarsely. "My babies! —An automobile. Anything. We must go home. I feel—something—here."

He looked at her a brief moment and then replied gently, "Very well, we'll go."

"You think I'm quite crazy, don't you," she smiled through her glistening eyes. "But there's something stronger than—this. I mean that." She pointed across at the lighted window. "And there is no such night, I guess, as 'That night.'"

THE DEFECTIVE

WHEN I first saw the man, he was sitting in the office of the Mansion House, in Paulham. His chair was tipped back upon its hind legs, in the approved fashion of country hotels, and except for the fact that he was exceptionally well dressed I should have thought him a prosperous townsman, living easily upon last fall's apple crop.

He was a medium-sized fellow, smoothly and recently shaved, and he had a soft, almost timid, eye. He seemed to be moving at a refined gait toward forty years old. He had laid out considerable money on his dress, and it made him distinguished, which is the highest office of clothes. I concluded that he must be a traveling salesman, probably in wine and spirits.

We got into conversation, and I found that my guess was bad; he lived in town. He was well read, amply informed, pleasant and easy in discourse, modest in demeanor. We exchanged cards. His name was Orville Stackwood. At half past four he took out a fine thin-model

watch and named the hour, saying that he should have to be going along toward home.

"Rather nice chap," I said to the hotel clerk, after Stackwood had gone.

"Oh, yes," was the reply. "Too bad about him. He's worth a lot of money, too."

"What is too bad about him?" I asked.

The hotel clerk regarded me with that look of astonishment worn by yokels when a stranger asks to be directed to the post office. They find it difficult to believe that the location of their post office is not a matter of international interest. "He ain't quite right; didn't you know that?"

"Not quite right?" I asked. "He struck me as being all right. What's the matter with him?"

"I dunno," was the answer. "That's all I know about it. He ain't all there. He lives up to Gould's." And then he told me about the great local institution for feeble-minded persons, built and maintained by a certain philanthropist for the care of the addled rich.

I was puzzled. Then I began to see the joke. I had been talking for more than an hour with a defective, without knowing it. There may have been something tinny about my silvery laughter.

It is not flattering to discover that you are capable of associating with the feeble-minded on their own terms.

In the next three days I found out a great deal about the Institution, as it was politely called by the townspeople. It was undoubtedly an institution. It dominated the village, both as to geography and sociology. Paulham is built upon a hilltop; and on the highest point of the place, with a magnificent sweep of the surrounding country before it, is Gould's.

Gould's harbored about a hundred defectives at this time. They were the product of well-to-do people; thus it might be said that they were the pick of the country's imbeciles. Some of them, having demonstrated their incapacity for doing harm, were allowed to roam about the streets. A few went to church. I went to church one day with a friend, who pointed out three of them, sitting together in a front pew.

"What woeful faces!" I exclaimed, and then began to descant upon them, when my friend, with mild tartness, informed me that I was looking at the wrong three persons. . . . On another occasion, on the street, I mistook the president of the Paulham Bank for one of Gould's aged

wards. It is a mistaken policy that permits these poor creatures to run at large among other people. It abolishes the only certain manner of identification. . . .

One day, a glorious, crisp day for walking, I met Orville Stackwood far out upon the Danwick road. He was going in the same direction and I caught up with him. He carried a fine stick, with engraved silver mounting. We walked along together for a few moments without speaking. Then I asked him: "Whereabouts in Paulham do you live?" A red flush came to his face, and instantly I felt like a cad. "At Gould's," he replied. Then he added, "The Institution, you know."

I was more puzzled than ever. That a feeble-minded person should blush at giving his correct address seemed apart from all experience. An imbecile would, on the contrary, be proud of living in the best and biggest house in town. I took courage and continued:

"You strike me as being an unusual person to be living at Gould's."

I felt safe in saying this. If he were truly feeble-minded, he could not be hurt by the bluntness, and he might be flattered.

Stackwood gave no evidence of being either flattered or hurt. He looked at me suspiciously for a moment out of the corners of his eyes, and seemed to be thrown on the defensive. Then he replied, in monotones: "I am not quite right."

"You are not quite right?" I repeated. This was simply incredible: that a defective should realize and state his case so judicially.

Stackwood's eyes became furtive. I thought for a moment he was going to take to his heels. But he replied steadily, "I am not quite right," and nodded his head.

Whether it was something about the man that gave the lie palpably to his assertion, and the assertion made about him; or whether it was because I felt that I had a duty toward myself to perform—to convince myself that I was not so feeble-minded as to fail to perceive what everybody else perceived; whatever the reason was, I blurted out: "Mr. Stackwood, I beg pardon; but you're no more feeble-minded than I am. You're as right as anybody. If you don't mind, what's your game?"

For a minute I thought I had gone too far. Stackwood's face darkened. He pursed up his mouth and his fingers clenched the walking stick

nervously. But just as I was ready to beat a retreat, he smiled feebly and said: "I think I can trust you."

"You certainly can," I promised.

He chafed his lower lip with his teeth. "Well, then," he said, "I *am* all right. I don't tell you because I want to; I'm afraid if I don't you'll talk. Give me your word you'll repeat to nobody in this town what I am going to tell you."

I promised again, my heart fluttering in joyous anticipation of romance.

"I *am* all right," he repeated, "though I do live at Gould's." He stopped and took thought. "You know," he went on, "if they should find out, up at the Institution, that I was all right, they wouldn't let me stay there. I'd be turned out to-morrow, money or no money." He laid his hand on my arm. "I can trust you, can't I?" And then, walking along at my side, he told me the story that follows here.

Orville Stackwood belonged to one of the oldest Massachusetts families; rich, refined, respectable. When he was five years old he was sent to a private school. There was already some doubt as to whether he was a normal child in every respect. The report of the private school

was couched in the language of diplomacy, but there was no mistaking the meaning. The child was considered a defective.

It was bitter poison for the Stackwood family. There were three other children, two boys and a girl, and all rather above the normal in development. At least one of them, the oldest, named George, showed signs of brilliancy. The necessity of getting the unfortunate lad into an institution where he could be well cared for naturally suggested itself to a family with wide and high social connections. Gould's was mentioned by a friend; Orville was sent there. The family had then done its best for him. Gould's was the highest-priced institution of its kind in the country.

When the first reports came in, the Stackwood father and mother scanned them eagerly for some hint of improvement. They were disappointed. The reports held out no hope. "He makes no trouble. He is in the best of health. It will be permitted that you send him a watch, if you desire." After a few years of declining hopes, Orville was forgotten. They could not bear to see him, so he was really dead to them. When the father died of apoplexy, it was found

that he had made in his will a provision for one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, to be held in trust, for the defective boy. A year afterward the mother died. At this time Orville was fourteen years old.

At the age of fifteen Orville began to wake up. The unaccountable barrier that had dammed the natural flow of his mentality slowly gave way. Little by little at first he learned; the momentum of his capacity for learning rapidly increased; it was thought well to retard him for his own good.

At the age of twenty Orville could read the newspapers, could figure accurately, and was as competent as the average citizen of Paulham, though the average citizen of Paulham might not admit it. He was permitted the freedom of the village, except that he had to return to the institution by five o'clock in the afternoon. Having plenty of money at his disposal, and being of a generous disposition, he got into the habit of looking after the wants of certain needy families of the town. This trait was favorably commented on by the townspeople, though of course it strengthened the belief in his mental deficiency.

One day Dr. Richard Brownell came to Paulham to spend a two weeks' vacation at the Mansion House, whose proprietor was an old friend. Orville, then a frequenter of the hotel, met the doctor, and they talked together. When he learned that the man with whom he had been speaking was an inmate of Gould's, Dr. Brownell was first astounded and then indignant. He knew, by hearsay, of Gould's institution. And he detested such places.

These two doctors represented polarities in their judgments of mental troubles. Dr. Gould believed, in a very broad way, that all persons were more or less incompetent, and that, with the possible exception of himself and wife, they would be better off under institutional restraint. Dr. Brownell utterly disbelieved in such restraint. In his eyes all were competent, only some more competent than others. He would raze institutions to the ground.

Dr. Brownell took Orville Stackwood aside. "What are you doing up at that place?" he asked sharply.

"Why, I've always been there," was the young man's reply.

"Don't you know you're just as capable as

anybody around here?" pursued the doctor. "Yes, and more so than some," he added.

The inmate of Gould's was perplexed. It was the first time anybody had suggested to him that he was capable. He began to take an interest in what this black-bearded, energetic man was saying.

Fact by fact, the doctor wormed the story of his incarceration from Orville. From time to time the doctor pounded on the arm of his chair and bounced around upon the seat of it, making such explosive exclamations as "Damnable outrage!" "Absolutely illegal!" "Ought to be tarred and feathered, by God!" Finally he seized his hat, planted it firmly on his head and said, "I'm going to whack you out of that place in about half a jiffy."

Orville opened his eyes wide. He began to believe that this man was in some authority. "What are you going to do?" he asked.

"Do? Do? I'm going to see your people. And then if they don't do something, I'll kidnap you."

His people! Orville Stackwood did not know them. He knew only that he had two brothers and a sister, and that they sent him something

every Christmas. The one named George had sent him a cane for five Christmases running, and then, just as Orville made up his mind that he could count on a cane as long as either of them lived, the gift changed to an umbrella and had been an umbrella ever since. Thus Orville knew that George was a man with more than one idea—and that was all he knew of George.

But the young man was pleased with the idea of getting away from Gould's. He knew himself to be the possessor of a handsome income, though it was impossible that he should know the spending value of money, since he had had so little experience. As he had grown older, the feeble-minded persons around him had begun to bore him. But his attitude toward them was not the attitude of the townspeople. He said to Dr. Brownell one day:

"You see, Doctor, all of the fellows and girls up home have their little specialty—something they can do better than most other people. Some of them can make wonderful faces, some can pull carpets apart without breaking the strands, and there is one that fixed a hall clock so that it struck thirteen. And they're very easy to get

along with. Only I get tired of them. So I spend most of my time in the village."

"Ah, ha!" chuckled Dr. Brownell gleefully. This was all grist for him, this information about the specialists at Gould's. The doctor was writing a book.

The upshot of it was that Dr. Brownell spent the last three days of his vacation interviewing members of the Stackwood family. They were reluctant to order the release of Orville; not because they were not overjoyed to learn how vastly he had improved; not because they would not be delighted to have him with them; but because of that awful possibility that the young man might have a relapse and do somebody harm.

"Rot!" said the doctor. "He's as harmless as a dove."

"Is he—er—presentable—you know?" asked Arthur, the second brother.

"He is just as presentable as you are," replied the doctor, who was inclined to be choleric in the prosecution of his enthusiasms. Arthur said no more; but he felt that a man of delicacy could have phrased the thing more happily.

The burly temperament of the doctor conquered the Stackwoods, who had been in the country since 1631, and were not strong. They agreed to order Dr. Gould to send Orville home. They hoped that Dr. Gould would demur; and they hoped not in vain. Dr. Gould demurred as only a man can demur who sees part of his business in danger. Orville was one of the cornerstones of the institution. He gave it tone, he gave it esteem, and he brought it money. But the doctor capitulated to his enemy Brownell, though he never met this enemy.

It being certain that Orville Stackwood must leave the institution, it became necessary to graduate him with éclat. The doctor was not a quack; he did not send out word that he had effected a cure, as some dishonest specialist might have done. He was a sincere man; he was proud of his feeble-minded charges, and he treated them well. He saw Orville leave with genuine regret. He shook hands and said, in a low voice: "If you should ever feel—uncertain—about what you want to do—a little queer—don't hesitate to come back to us, Orville." The doctor had gone as far as he professionally could, in saying that.

Orville went at once to the home of his brother Arthur.

Arthur Stackwood had married, and his home was in the best section of Boston. Strangers do not know where this section is; but the old families know, and they live there. The meeting between the two brothers was a Boston classic. It was refined and restrained, with no awkward demonstrations. But Arthur was relieved to find that his long-lost brother had no physical imperfections; that he was, in brief, a well-looking and presentable person.

Arthur had done well by his patrimony. He showed by his investments that he had inherited his father's sagacity, for they were the very solidest. He did not find it necessary to employ himself in productive labor; but a man must needs throw himself into some form of action. Arthur was considered one of the three best bridge-whist players in the Eastern States.

"Do you play bridge?" was one of his first questions of his brother.

Orville had heard of the game, but it was not in vogue at Gould's. He shook his head.

Arthur looked perplexed for a moment. This was a contingency—a social disability, in fact—

of which he had not thought. But he brightened up after a while and said, "You'll have to learn." He took Orville into the library and showed him his books on bridge. "This is the best book for the beginner," he advised, placing a thin volume in his brother's hands.

Though an enthusiast, Arthur displayed the characteristic Stackwood temperateness. He never played bridge before luncheon. Mrs. Arthur Stackwood was one of the best women players in the State. They earnestly tried to do their best for Orville Stackwood. They considered him, finally, recalcitrant. Several times Arthur came into the library and found Orville reading fiction. He was too courteous to say anything abrupt, but his face showed that he knew that he was in the thick of a domestic problem. The situation gradually became untenable.

The end came when Orville failed to lead with his fourth best spade one evening in a little informal affair at the Stackwood home.

Next day Orville went to live with his sister.

Kathryn Stackwood had married Phillips Brice, of the Brices of Stonedale. It was a love match; money was no object on either side.

She was a charming woman, four years older than Orville; her husband weighed one hundred and twenty pounds, wore a drooping mustache and collected postage stamps. He had the best collection of Indo-China revenue issues ever brought together in the United States. A British collector, hearing of the Brice collection, had journeyed to this country in a wheel chair to see it, and had died on the way home—of a broken heart, it is said. Mr. Brice also had a Canadian stamp without perforations on the side.

Orville was well received at his sister's house. Brice took a strong fancy to him. Before the first day was over he presented his brother-in-law with a rare Bermuda stamp, with which to start a collection. "But remember to specialize," he warned Orville. "Most collectors fail in trying to cover too much ground. Don't get side-tracked. I made the mistake once of trying to collect New South Wales in addition to my Indo-China. But I saw my mistake in time."

On one occasion Mr. Brice came home in a state of pure intoxication—of a non-alcoholic kind. "What do you think of that?" he asked of Orville, laying a stamp on the table in front of him.

"Fine," said Orville. "What is it?"

"You wouldn't know at first," was the reply. "It's an Indo-China, with the gum on the wrong side. I got it from a man that didn't know it's true value. It cost me only two hundred dollars."

"Bully for you," said Orville, always anxious to please.

Mrs. Brice was not at home much. She was working for the suffrage. At first it had pained the other members of the family to learn that their sister was speaking to variegated groups of persons on street corners, by the light of a gasoline torch; but when they found out that other influential women were in the movement, they said no more. Brice never said much about it. He found it best to acquiesce without words. He was a kind-hearted, generous little man, and when asked to parade in favor of votes for women, he paraded. In one parade he was annoyed by a number of tomatoes thrown from the sidewalk, but he suffered no complaint to escape him.

Orville tried honestly to become interested in the life work of his hosts, and resorted to cunning simulations of enthusiasm, but without

much success. He was not willing, however, to parade. There was something stubborn about him. He did not like the idea of parading for the female ballot, and he said so.

Brice took Orville aside and stroked him on the subject. He did not want any trouble. He had come to like his brother-in-law and liked to have him around. "It's not an important matter," he said. "*I* parade, you know."

Orville became exasperated. "Those who wish to parade may parade," he replied. "I don't."

Soon afterward he went to live with his brother George.

George, as Orville knew, was the flower of the family. He remembered hearing—just where or when he did not know—that in George Stackwood the family had touched the heights. He had been graduated from Harvard with honors. It was George Stackwood who had tackled Willstach, the Princeton quarterback, on Harvard's five-yard line, in the last ten seconds of play. Every year, since that time, the papers printed his picture.

George had not married, in spite of his widely known eligibility. He lived in a sumptuous bachelor apartment house that reminded Orville

of the Arabian Nights. Every improvement that had been suggested to the human mind toward the abolition of effort was installed in this house. It was operated with buttons. One button would procure more heat, another more drinks. The heating arrangements were almost perfect.

After a year or two with automobiles, during which he had gained much publicity by driving a mile on a straight track in twenty-six seconds, whereas the best former amateur record had been twenty-six and one-eighth, George had now gone in for aviation; and at the time his brother came to live with him, the sport was occupying all his waking hours. He was, at the moment, preparing to volplane with the machine flying upside down. In aviation circles it was generally admitted that the success of this experiment would mean much to science.

"I'm mighty glad to see you," was the hearty greeting of George. "You probably know I'm all tied up with flying, but I want you to make yourself just as much at home as though you'd always been here."

"Thank you," replied Orville gratefully.

"To-morrow I'll take you out to my hangar," he added. Then he explained, seeing that the

word was new to his brother: "The place where I keep my birds."

"I'd like to see it," said Orville.

"Then, next week some time," went on the aviator, as though determined to carry hospitality and family loyalty to the highest point, "I'll take you for a ride in my new biplane."

"Me?" asked Orville.

"Certainly. There's room for a passenger. To tell the truth, Orville, I'm mighty glad you've come. I've been wanting to try out some little ideas of mine about carrying passengers, and you're the very one to help me."

"Are these ideas—er—new ones?" asked Orville, after a little hesitation.

"Comparatively," replied the brother, suppressing an honest pride.

Orville shuddered; his brother did not observe it. "I'll make a regular J. K. Burke of you," said George with a smile.

"Who was J. K. Burke?" asked Orville.

"Never heard of him? One of the greatest aviators that ever lived. Was killed at Moscow last July. Fell four thousand feet."

"I should prefer to be like you, George," said Orville naïvely. "You're still alive."

George laughed heartily. "Good!" he cried, clapping Orville on the back. "I'll tell that at the club."

Next day Orville went out to the aviation grounds with his brother. From beginning to end he felt like a man struggling to awake from a dream; fighting to push away the veil of unreality and come back to the earth he knew—the earth of Dr. Gould's institution with its hundred inmates, all specialists.

These specialists of aviation, clothed in fantastic garb, were tinkering with their great flyers; speeding them along upon their bicycle wheels; leaping off into the air; skittering down the course about fifteen feet from the ground; sailing away into the blue heavens above. And all this with the same nonchalance with which Orville had walked down the main street of Paulham, swinging his stick. The visitor expected to see somebody killed that afternoon, but nobody so much as had his clothing damaged. Still, Orville had an unpleasant mental picture, that gradually grew into an obsession, of J. K. Burke falling four thousand feet at Moscow. The more he thought of the sport, the less he liked it.

Several nights afterward George said: "To-

morrow, if it isn't too windy, we'll try out some of those little ideas of mine."

"To-morrow," repeated Orville, growing cold.

"Yes, about half past one, if you don't mind. I wish you'd come right out to the hangar, if you shouldn't hear from me. . . . And, by the way, Orville, I've been planning a little surprise for you. There's a young lady I want you to meet. She's just the—well, you can judge for yourself. I don't want to advise anybody. But you'll like her. Her name is Williamson—Alice Williamson—college girl—up to date—Gibson type, all that sort of thing. I want to take you around to-morrow night, after we finish our afternoon's sport."

Orville showed a natural interest. "That's mighty good of you," he said. Then he sat in deep thought for a moment. "Does she play bridge?" he asked suddenly.

"Bully little player, I understand."

A faint tinge of red came into Orville's cheeks.

"She—do you think she's interested in the—er—suffrage, George?"

"Well, I should say so. She's been in court twice for obstructing traffic," replied George enthusiastically.

Orville gulped. "Maybe," he said, "she collects postage stamps?"

"I don't think so," said George. "But I heard somebody say she's interested in very old sugar-bowls. By gracious, she's just the girl for you, do you know!"

Orville rose from his chair and came over to his brother. His eyes were full of resignation; his cheeks, from having been flushed, had now gone pale. "You want me to be at the hangars at one thirty to-morrow, George?"

"Yes, if you will."

"I'll be there," said Orville, extending a hand.

"Good for you," replied George.

Orville kept his word. The next afternoon he was on hand promptly. He had thought it all over the night before, and decided that it didn't make much difference anyway. So far as he could see, the intense specialization of the life into which he had entered was not likely ever to prove attractive to him. He had put his small affairs in order, laid out clean linen for the morrow, and had then peacefully gone to sleep.

George wanted Orville to don an aviation costume, but the latter refused. He did not have any special reason for refusing; simply he did

not fancy the idea. He had no great sensation as he clambered into the seat behind his brother. Whatever he had had of fear had resolved itself into curiosity. Besides, he had a plan. The plan was to be executed in case the aviation experiments did not prove immediately fatal, as they had in the case of J. K. Burke, in Moscow.

The biplane was got into position on the cinder track in front of the hangars, and all was in readiness. The engine started. There was a swishing of air behind; the machine began to move along the ground slowly. "Ready?" asked George.

Orville replied in the affirmative.

Suddenly the speed was accelerated, and then, with no perceptible strain, Orville felt himself lifted into the air. He looked down quickly and saw the cinder path dropping out from under him. Something heavy was laid upon his stomach, and at the same time his breath began to come in small gusts. In another moment they were speeding along, not more than fifty feet from the ground. They circled the field a couple of times, and then alighted without a jar. "She's working beautifully," was George's comment.

"Now where would you like to go—any particular place?"

"I'd like to go out Paulham way," was the ready reply.

"Out Paulham way? I should think—" George got as far as that when he caught himself. He hastened to add: "All right. But I'm not sure of the direction."

"It's on the line of the B. C. & M., you know," suggested Orville.

"Oh, yes, I know—just beyond the Templeport Inn."

Orville nodded. "I'd like to see what it looks like around there from above," he explained.

In a few moments they were off. The biplane ascended to a height of two hundred feet, and skimmed along smoothly at that altitude for several miles. George turned his head, and his brother leaned close to catch the words. "We'll go up a little, eh?"

Orville, at the moment, had a vision of the young woman that played bridge, obstructed traffic and collected old sugarbowls. "Good!" he cried in reply. And they soared upward.

Suddenly Orville bawled, joyously: "I see it! I see the Institution!" George did not hear. His

brother touched him on the arm and pointed to a cluster of buildings topping a hill to their right. "Over there I used to live," said Orville shamelessly.

Mademoiselle Chance played the next card. The engine began to miss explosions, and George, selecting a level, open field, came down to earth to make an examination. As the biplane stopped moving, Orville sprang out and began to run. He heard his brother cry, "Where are you going?" but he paid no attention. There was a clump of woods on the edge of the field, and he made for the trees. Once out of sight, he began to walk, but he walked rapidly.

Twice he lost his direction, and stumbled aimlessly around in the forest, his clothing suffering from the bushes that reached out upon him. A low-hanging limb caught his hat and retained it. He went on without it. When he came out at last upon a highway, he recognized it as a little-traveled road that went up through Leesville, to Paulham.

It was nearly dark when Orville entered the outskirts of Paulham. Kerosene eyes were beginning to wink in the houses ahead of him. Half an hour later he entered the beautiful

grounds of the Institution. He went straight to the house of Dr. Gould, ran up the steps lightly and rang. He saw the doctor himself rise and come toward the door.

When the door opened the two men regarded each other swiftly. Orville's clothes, which had been new the week before, were rumpled and torn; he was hatless, and there were spots of dried blood on his face, where the bushes had scratched him. But there was a radiant smile on his face.

"I'm back, Doctor!" he cried.

"Orville Stackwood! What's the matter? How did you get here?"

"In an aëroplane," replied Orville.

The doctor raised his eyebrows. "An aëroplane?" he repeated. Then he shook his head slightly. He took Orville's hand gently in his own and murmured: "Poor boy! I thought you'd come back!"

THE GOOD INFLUENCE

WHEN the city authorities laid out Jackson Park, they thoughtfully included a baseball diamond "for the little ones." I have never seen the "little ones" playing on that diamond; but time and time I have sat under a nearby tree, summer afternoons, and watched the Shiny Cups playing the Rusty Dippers.

I like to see the Shiny Cups playing the Rusty Dippers. I would rather view a game between the Shiny Cups and the Rusty Dippers than a post-season series in the big league.

Here is sport without the suspicion of fraud; sport that is incontestably amateur; eighteen young men, all too strong to work, ridding themselves of surplus energy, heart and soul. Neither the Shiny Cups nor the Rusty Dippers would run a city block upon a "practical" matter, though the matter concerned the fate of nations; but they will tear around the bases, chase the ball like deerhounds and comport themselves with stupendous agility all the afternoon in Jackson

Park. They are what the world was when the world was young.

And Duff Cassidy was what the world was when the world was in its mere infancy. He symbolized the beginnings of human life. Duff was all action—no thought whatever; except the instinctive sort of mental activity necessary to complete a snappy double play. Duff was captain of the Rusty Dippers, and as Duff is going to be the principal figure in this narrative, I am going to give him the center of the stage, and throw the spotlight upon him.

At the moment of introduction to you, Duff is twenty years old. In another year he will be qualified to vote, at least once, in the nineteenth ward. He has that fullness of frame and muscular development which draws from admiring members of his own social class the term "husky." A husky boy; no doubt about it. A face with good color and Irish blue eyes is topped by a poll of reddish-brown hair, with a tendency to curl. Duff cultivates this curling disposition, and wears his derby hat on the back of his head so that no tithe of the effect will be lost to admiring eyes.

Duff has all the primitive virtues and all the

primitive vices. He is full of emotions and full of traditions. Thus he will gallantly escort an old woman across the traffickful street; he will try to flirt with the same old woman's daughter; and he has an envious eye to pocketbooks and unguarded suit-cases. He smokes an incredible number of cigarettes, will down a gill of cut-throat whiskey in one gulp, and his talk is punctuated with violent oaths that sound bad though they mean nothing. On the other hand, he will cheerfully give away anything he possesses in response to the impulse of pity.

Duff's father was a hard-working man. His stepfather was a loafer. In some strange manner which the exponents of the theory of heredity will no doubt explain satisfactorily, Duff inherited from his stepfather rather than from his sire. At any rate, Duff was a born loafer. He was the kind of loafer that is prevented from working by sheer excess of vitality. He was the loafer premier of the neighborhood around Jackson Park. He was so utterly accomplished that, after a few misdirected attempts to seduce him from this occupation, the tradesmen and employers ceased to dream of him as a laboring factor.

Nature had fitted Duff to be captain of the Rusty Dippers; or, in fact, leader in any unproductive diversion.

Nature had not thought of Duff Cassidy as a useful, moral or intellectual citizen.

In his sphere, Duff was a constant and consummate success. Unless you realize this, you will not understand his downfall, which began on the last day of May, 1911, with the appearance of Mrs. De Ruyter in the vicinage of Jackson Park.

Mrs. De Ruyter, on the last day of May, 1911, having nothing upon her mind except a modish Parisian bonnet, was being driven along Algonquin Avenue in her car, when she suddenly had the desire to see how the other half of the world lives. She bade her chauffeur show her this phenomenon; and he flew down a side street in the direction of Jackson Park, where Duff Cassidy was leading the Rusty Dippers to victory. Running a large motor car through this neighborhood, where race suicide has not yet begun, is a good way to see how the other half of the world dies; but the chauffeur was a careful man, and the horn scared the youngest children into convulsions and thus saved their lives.

Mrs. De Ruyter was rich; but not one of the idle rich. On the contrary, her mind was alive to very many things of which it is the poor's pride to believe the rich ignorant. For one thing, she knew the fine points of baseball as well as any twelve-dollar-a-week clerk; possibly better. She was present when Cy Young and Rube Waddell pitched that sixteen-inning game. . . .

And thus she became interested in Duff Cassidy. Duff was pitching for the Rusty Dippers; and when the De Ruyter automobile glided into the background, Duff was winding up to deliver a moist-ball to one of the Shiny Cups. The batter nearly dislocated his entire bone structure in fanning the air, and was declared out, and the jubilant Rusty Dippers trotted in from the field.

At this point Mrs. De Ruyter was disturbed, but not dismayed, by having two distinct and polar ideas at once. One idea was to say to the chauffeur: "Drive to Gaillard's." The idea was associated with tea.

The other idea was to call the pitcher for the Rusty Dippers up to her motor car and talk with him. This idea was associated with a vague be-

lief that had long lain dormant in the lady's mind, that she ought now and then do something for the lower classes. She had never known just how to proceed to do anything for the lower classes. But she had a feeling that she really ought to be interested in such things.

Duff Cassidy, when told of this strange desire on the part of the swell lady in the automobile, grinned sheepishly at his mates and replied, "You're kiddin'."

The messenger affirmed.

"Wushy wammy for?" inquired Duff.

The messenger could not say. She just wanted to speak with "that pitcher."

"Go on, Duff," urged one of the Rusty Dippers. "There may be two bits in it. These swell skirts don't care what they do with their money."

"Tell her we need a new ball!" shouted one of the Shiny Cups.

So Duff Cassidy, with his hat removed, showing that curly reddish-brown hair, approached the automobile in what he assumed to be an air of insouciance; at the same time trying to think of a fitting speech.

The first words spoken by the lady relieved Duff of his set speech, and at the same time

showed him that the lady was "all to the good." She smiled as Duff approached and saluted him: "Is your name Christy Mathewson?"

And yet some people say the capitalist class lacks tact!

Duff Cassidy blushed from ear to ear and from neck to eye. He did not know just how to reply, so he said, in an undertone, "G'wan!"

"Do you mind telling me your name?" asked the lady.

"Cassidy," murmured Duff. And then he added the word "marm," as a tender courtesy.

"And your first name?"

"John. But they call me Duff. Because—"

Mrs. De Ruyter handed him a card. "If you will call, some afternoon—say, to-morrow afternoon—perhaps I can be of some help to you. Seven-seven-five Algonquin Avenue; if you forget the number you can look it up in the directory. Don't be afraid to come; I really want you to. Shall I expect you?"

Duff, speechless, nodded. Then he bowed slightly. He caught sight of two quizzical eyes turned cautiously in her direction from the driver's seat, and the whimsy ran through his mind that he would be pleased to choke the

chauffeur to death. Then he went back to the Rusty Dippers, and the De Ruyter motor car slid off into regions where it would feel more at home.

"How muchjer get?" bawled several of the players at once.

"Who's your friend?" drawled somebody; and a laugh went up.

From that point it did not take long for the conversation to reach a Rabelaisian tone. The lower classes read the newspapers, and suspect the upper classes in consequence.

"I can lick the guy that opens his face about that lady," shouted Duff, clenching his fists. "And I can begin right off quick."

There was no question about the honesty of this announcement. The game was renewed.

During the rest of the day, however, Duff's playing was erratic. His attention was constantly distracted by the presence of the squarish card in his pocket. Romantic notions began to swarm. If the swell dame had a daughter? . . . Was there any money in it? . . . Could they maybe introduce him to Johnny McGraw—and get him a try-out with the Giants? . . .

"What's the matter with youse, Duff?" howled

the second baseman, as one of the Shiny Cups stole second while Duff dreamed. "These guys'll steal your front teeth in a minute."

"Thatsallright," replied Duff good-naturedly. "I got to thinkin' about somethin'."

Mr. De Ruyter was a hard-working man who, in the course of his brokerage business, had amassed something like a million dollars and a half. Once in a while he felt the inclination to ease up a little; maybe to retire to a farm in the country; but then he would meet some man that had a million and three-quarters, and with a sigh and a sharp self-reproof, would go back to work with renewed earnestness.

When Mr. De Ruyter had looked upon the husky person of Duff Cassidy, and had heard his wife's uplift intentions, he had this to say: "Get him a new suit of clothes and tell him not to brush his hair down over his forehead, and then send him out to look for a job."

"You don't understand at all, Jack," remonstrated Mrs. De Ruyter. "The young fellow has never had a chance. I feel sure I can make something of him. What he needs is a good influence."

"I think he ought to go to work," persisted the practical man.

"I think he ought to be fitted to meet life," was the reply.

"You do just as you please, Nell," concluded the broker. "I don't say you may not find it very interesting. Perhaps you can do something with him. I don't know. If you can fit him to meet life, and let him form a large acquaintance with people with money, I can possibly use him in the office to help unload a lot of that Cobalt Bluejay we were stung with."

"I want you to take it seriously," warned Mrs. De Ruyter.

"All right; I will," was the good-natured reply. "Do as you please."

A new outfit of clothes and some money in his pocket made Duff Cassidy look like a prosperous teamster and feel like a bartender. Mrs. De Ruyter had a heart-to-heart talk with him.

"The first thing you must do, Duff," she said, "is to get as much education as possible. You are too old to do the day school, so you must go to the night school. In the daytime I want you to go to the public library and read. I shall give you tickets to good lectures and music, and

those will teach you a great deal. I am a very busy woman, Duff, with many social responsibilities, and I cannot give you as much time as I should like, but I shall expect you to report your progress to me regularly."

"Yes, marm," said Duff.

Nothing had been said in connection with a try-out with the New York Giants. But the present scheme looked so attractive to Duff that his thoughts were lifted quite above baseball. Swell folks were interested in him! He had a suit that cost thirty-five dollars, and a pair of boots that cost an even five. And he had ten dollars in his pocket and knew where to get more.

Duff registered faithfully at the evening school, and went to the public library two days in succession. On the second day he was asked to leave the periodical reading room for laughing aloud at a picture he saw in *Puck,* the tacit understanding between the library trustees and the public being that all enjoyment of the comic papers should be purely mental.

At the evening school Duff found a fellow about his own age that he instinctively felt was "all right." After school they matched for the drinks. There was also a young woman teacher

that appealed to Duff's fancy. He assumed that she admired his hair, which had escaped the chastisement suggested by Mr. De Ruyter. So Duff was able to make an initial report to his benefactress that the evening school "had made a hit with him." And he permitted the swell lady to assume that he had made a hit with the evening school.

About the middle of June the De Ruyters went abroad. Mr. De Ruyter's health was bad, and he was taking that sterling old advice which has made the fortunes of many doctors—a rest. At the last moment—almost on the way to the ship—Mrs. De Ruyter stopped suddenly and exclaimed: "What in the world shall I do with Duff?"

"Take him with us," replied her husband.

"Don't jest, please, Jack. What can we do with him?"

"Turn him over to one of your friends. Why not?"

Mrs. De Ruyter considered a few moments. "I think Emmy Ralston will look after him," she said. "She's interested in that sort of thing. Poor Duff! I almost forgot him."

"That's nothing. We almost forgot Toto," said her husband pleasantly. Toto was the chow dog.

Having set her seal of disapproval on this pleasantry, Mrs. De Ruyter hastily wrote the following note to Emmy Ralston:

DEAREST EMMY:

You *must* do this for me. I am *simply depending* on you. Jack and I are off on the *Mauretania* to-day, and I am leaving Duff Cassidy with you. I will have him call on you and explain all about it. He is a very good boy and will improve *wonderfully* under a good influence. I'll write you again when we get aboard.

NELL.

At this point Mrs. De Ruyter disappears from the narrative permanently. The De Ruyters were abroad a whole year. You may be interested and gratified to know that Mr. De Ruyter recovered his nervous health, and sold a large block of J. P. & W. to a German syndicate. It is well to combine business with hygiene.

As for Emmy Ralston, she does not appear in the narrative at all. On receipt of Mrs. De Ruyter's note, she sat down at her escritoire and produced this missive:

MY DEAR POLLY:

You probably know that the De Ruyters sailed today. Nell, who is a dear girl but often very thoughtless, left a certain protégé of hers on my hands. As nearly as I can make out from the scrawl—isn't she the worst writer in the world!—his name is Duffy something that begins with a C and doesn't end on the sheet of paper. Now, Polly, I cannot, I simply cannot, take this person up. We go to the shore next week, and I am just as busy as I can possibly be. I am making a small financial provision for the boy, and taking the great liberty of turning him over to you, for I know that sort of thing is your specialty. You'll do it for little Emmy, won't you? By the way . . . and did you know . . .

Nor does Mrs. Ernest Wilmerding—the "Polly" referred to in the above communication—grace these pages with her person. She addressed a plea to Mrs. Albert Sconefield, in the following words:

ALICE DEAR:

I don't like to take advantage of your sweet disposition . . . man left behind by the De Ruyters . . . I know you had bad luck with your Armenian immigrant girl, but . . . I enclose a check to give him a little start, etc., etc.

Mrs. Sconefield sighed when she read the note. She was a good-natured woman, and was, be-

sides, under some small obligations to Mrs. Wilmerding. So, for two weeks, she guided the uncertain course of Duff Cassidy. She never actually saw Duff, but she arranged that Duff should call at the office of her husband's attorney and there receive spiritual and financial advice and refreshment. At the end of two weeks, feeling that the pressure of her routine duties forbade any further chaperonage of the young Cassidy, she turned him over to a settlement-worker of the Chauncey Street Extension.

Thus, in the course of a bare fortnight, Duff Cassidy was shot through society like a cash container through a pneumatic tube. He made the trip, without a stop, in record time. It made him a little dizzy. In one day alone he had enjoyed three separate matronages. Early in July he was shot out of the tube into the professional waiting arms of J. P. Wells, Jr., of the Chauncey Street Settlement.

J. P. Wells, Jr., was a young man—hardly the senior of Duff Cassidy—in whom ideals had matured early. He was one of a group of trained young persons whose object was to lighten the hearts of the millions. It was understood that what the millions needed was joy and improve-

ment and the Chauncey Street "workers" had been so industrious that at the time Duff came under their care, joy and improvement were as common as pawn tickets. Improvers and improved mingled on terms of delightful equality; class distinctions were utterly wiped away; and the only way to distinguish the settlement-workers from the settlement-worked would have been by an X-ray examination of their stomachs and pocketbooks.

The "workers" were a merry crew of enthusiasts, to whom every calendar day brought new adventure. The work was undoubtedly full of romance. Among the "workers" love matches were the rule. The constant excitement of doing something for somebody, and the knowledge that two persons could do more for somebody than one, furnished details for many a union that was neatly described in the headlines as a "pretty settlement romance."

J. P. Wells, Jr., greeted Duff Cassidy with a smile and outstretched hand. His first tones were calculated to convince Duff that he (J. P. W., Jr.) thought him (Duff) just as good as he (J. P. W., Jr.) was. Possibly the young "worker" did not take into consideration the

possibility that Duff thought himself a little better than anybody he had ever met.

"I'm mighty glad to see you, Cassidy," said the worker. "I know we're going to get along fine together. You've been described to me as a young fellow anxious to get ahead and make something of yourself. You can count on our help in every way."

Duff smiled grimly, and pump-handled the other youth's arm with abandon. "Did Missus De Ruyter tell you about me?" he asked.

"Er—Mrs. De Ruyter? No; the lady's name was Sconefield."

"Oh, well, it's all the same," replied Duff easily, taking a package of cheap cigarettes from his pocket and offering one. "I know all those swell dames. Mrs. De Ruyter seen me pitching—"

You could scarcely blame Mr. Wells for being a little bit hurt at the self-confident manner of Mr. Cassidy. A young man asking for help—in desperate need, in fact, of joy and improvement—ought to show a reasonable amount of humility. But the worker shook his head in negation of cigarettes, and replied: "I don't think I ever met Mrs. De Ruyter."

"Prob'ly not," replied Duff. "She's a bear, though. She seen me throwin' my spitter—"

"Your—pardon me?"

"Spitball. You do like this, and hold the ball like this—"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Mr. Wells. "I'd like to hear all about that later. Won't you come in now and register, and enroll yourself in some of the courses—"

"Mrs. De Ruyter was preparin' me for collidge," announced Duff, still bent on making himself loom large in the foreground of the conversation.

"Ah!" replied Mr. Wells, trying not to show any skepticism. The fundamental rule for getting along with settlement candidates is not to argue or quarrel with them.

"Sure thing," continued Duff. "And there was talk about adoppin' me." A silence. Then Duff added: "This here suit cost fifty dollars."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Wells, in what would have been a fatal excess of admiration if Duff had been more understanding than he was. "Now, Cassidy, if you'll come in and sit down a while, we'll discuss the prospects. Are you—er—working at present?"

"Nix," replied Duff. "I'm gettin' a education."

"But the money question?"

"Huh! Mrs. De Ruyter is puttin' up the coin. Ever sinst she seen me pitchin'—"

"Will you step this way, Cassidy?" said Mr. Wells briskly.

"This guy's nutty," said Duff to himself as they went into the executive office. "He wants to do all the talkin'."

Duff was left alone for a short time while Mr. Wells went into the telephone cabinet. After a while the worker came out with a smile of enlightenment. "I understand the circumstances now, Cassidy," he said. "I've been talking with Mrs. Sconefield. It seems you've been having quite an adventure, haven't you? I'm glad for your sake you fell in with such kindly people. I tell you, Cassidy, there's more real downright good in the rich than they're often given credit for.

"But the case as it stands is something like this: Mrs. De Ruyter has gone to Europe, and Mrs. Sconefield is going to be so very busy, that you have been turned over to us. I'm afraid your—salary, or whatever it was, won't continue.

You see, our idea is that, so far as possible, our young men and women should be self-supporting. We quarrel somewhat with the old idea of charity, which—"

"Lemme git you right," said Duff. "Ain't Mrs. De Ruyter goin' to put up no more stuff for my education?"

"I believe not, Cassidy. You see—"

"How do I know you ain't framin' this up on me?" cried Duff, with a choking sensation of disappointment, and a gleam of suspicion in his eyes. "I'll believe it when I get it from Mrs. De Ruyter."

"I can let you talk with Mrs. Sconefield," said Wells soothingly. "As I said, the other lady is in Europe."

There was something convincing about the worker's manner and tone. Duff stared at the floor a few moments, and then forced a grin. "Canned!" he said.

"But I don't understand that the lady's interest in you is gone," continued Mr. Wells. "On the contrary, Cassidy, I think if you go to work and go to the night school and improve your time, she'll be very much pleased when she gets back."

"Is that right?" asked Duff, with renewed interest.

"I really think so. Where did you work last, Cassidy?"

Duff sat up straight and tried to think quickly. He couldn't remember any work that he had done except errands for Schmucke, the delicatessen man, some five years ago. "I was clerk in a store," he announced.

Mr. Wells produced a menacing pad of paper and pencil. "What store was that?"

"It burned down a short while ago," replied Duff promptly.

"You could probably find the man that ran it?"

"He moved away," was the answer. And then, to be on the safe side, Duff added: "It was a small store. I was the only clerk."

"You're well built," said Mr. Wells; "very strong, I suppose?"

"Sure thing," replied Duff.

"We could probably place you somewhere in a shipping department," the worker hazarded. "Would you like that?"

"I guess so," replied Duff dully.

They got him a job rustling packing cases in a

wholesale oyster house. The salary was six dollars a week to start; and the position was one of those that uses up a number of years in starting. But it was all the same to Duff. Civilization had reached out, through the long arm of the Chauncey Street Settlement, and collared Duff Cassidy and put him to work. Duff's splendid idleness had reeked in the nostrils of a hard-working world long enough. There is no longer any appreciation of fine loafing. Duff went to work.

Duff went to work with a protest, but he went to work. The fact was, he was a little bit frightened. He had suddenly had the feeling of poverty.

When Duff was spending his time as leading spirit of the Rusty Dippers he had not felt poor, though he was hard put to it for cigarette money at times, particularly when his stepfather had been first to meet Mrs. Cassidy on her return from a scrubbing job. There were days when he had only a few nickels. But he had not felt poor. On the contrary, he had been lord of all he surveyed.

Now he felt that all the luxuries of life had

been subtracted from him. He had a good suit of clothes and six dollars a week in prospect. It looked like slavery.

There was a man at the shipping desk that acted like a czar. He bossed Duff around as though he owned him. He said "Here, you!" to him. To Duff Cassidy, well known on Algonquin Avenue! If any of the Rusty Dippers or Shiny Cups had said "Here, you!" like that, to Duff, there would have been a quick combat. But this man was somewhat. This was a man in obvious authority, backed by a vague syndicate of power and probably by the police. When Duff was attracted from the warehouse by passing fire engines, and detained by the progress of a nearby fire, this satrap actually called Duff vile names. Duff's blood boiled. But there was something the matter with him; he couldn't say anything in retort.

Five weeks Duff rustled cases of oysters, and then he drifted away one Saturday morning after receiving his wages, and promised himself never to return any more.

Duff forgot the uplifters at the settlement. He had not reckoned on their zeal for giving him joy and improvement. They came after him

and landed him—not in the oyster house, because the people there wouldn't take him back anyway —but in a coal and wood yard, where he could make himself happy in contemplation of studies in black and white. And Duff went to work again. He wanted to run. He wanted to fight. He wanted to go back to the diamond on Jackson Park playground and shoot over a few fast ones. But something had him in its grip. He felt poor. He felt the necessity of living up to his suit of clothes.

The settlement people yearned to make Duff useful, honorable and above all diligent. They had a laudable desire to be able to say, some day, pointing to Duff: "That's one of our boys. When we took hold of him— And now look at him!"

Duff was detected pitching lumps of coal at a telegraph pole, and was promptly fired, after one week. Fired, yes; in spite of the fact that he had hit the pole seventeen times out of thirty shots, showing really wonderful "control."

Duff was also released by an express company, by a livery stable and a cheap restaurant. Then the settlement gave him up. He had demonstrated that he did not care enough about joy and

improvement to do the right thing. In the restaurant he spilled a large dish of something on his thirty-five-dollar suit, and this cut him off definitely from the Algonquin Avenue class. Then he went back to Jackson Park.

Duff got back to Jackson Park one afternoon in the early autumn and sauntered out on the field, looking very much as he had looked when Fate in her motor car had come to whisk him away.

"Here's Duff!" cried the Rusty Dippers and the Shiny Cups.

"How's the food at the Waldorf?" shouted somebody.

"Put on your kid gloves, Duff!" advised a Rusty Dipper.

"Parley-voo fransay?" offered a linguistic ball player.

"Quit yer kiddin'!" said Duff. "Lemme take a hand."

"We got a feller now that can pitch all round you, Duff," said a Shiny Cup, with great satisfaction. Many's the time Duff had "fanned" this lad.

"Kin he?" replied Duff, not much disturbed.

"He's a regular Rube Marquard," persisted the tormentor.

"Is he?" replied Duff. "I'll make him look like a piker. Grab that mitt, Wally, while I warm up."

Duff wound up and started with a fast, straight ball that plunked into the mitt very comfortably. Then he varied with a few curves. "Whatd'yer think, Wally?" he yelled.

"Pretty fair, Duff. Only, they ain't got quite the old steam."

What follows is very painful to write. There is nothing so pitiful as the fall of an idol. The first day Duff pitched for the Rusty Dippers they batted him all over the lot. Score: Shiny Cups 27, Rusty Dippers, 3. Duff struck out three times out of a possible four.

The next day, owing to fast fielding by Duff's supporters, the Shiny Cups made only eighteen runs to six.

The third day, in the middle of the game, after Duff had passed five men in succession, the catcher of the Rusty Dippers threw his mitt into the dust and sat down. "Back to the Waldorf, Duff!" he yelled. "Back to Delmonico's! You can't pitch any more than a drunken sailor.

These here guys'll break all the bats on your stuff. Back to the bench!"

"I'm a little off to-day," confessed Duff. "But I'll come round all right."

"You're a dead one," replied the catcher, hugging his knees. "My sister could hit you. The bush league for youse, Duff. Let the real pitcher have a show." He pointed to the "regular Rube Marquard," that had usurped Duff's place in the Park.

"Git up and lemme have a show," begged Duff.

"Back to the bush!" cried all the Rusty Dippers and Shiny Cups.

Duff dropped the ball in the pitcher's box and started for the open space back of the catcher. He sat down and watched the new idol step confidently into his place. He watched him strike out two Shiny Cups in succession and force the third to an easy out. Then his head felt light, and he got up and met the new pitcher as he walked in toward the place.

"You think you're the goods, don't yer?" said Duff to him. "I've a good min' to knock yer block off."

Whether Duff really intended any offensive movement is not to the point. The real point is

that the new pitcher did not await that contingency. He landed squarely on Duff's jaw and knocked him out as cleanly as the thing was ever done in the region of Jackson Park. When Duff came to, he was on his back looking up at the blue sky. It took him a minute or two to sense the situation. Then he said: "I ain't right these days."

The Rusty Dippers and Shiny Cups still play ball every pleasant afternoon in Jackson Park, but Duff Cassidy is not there. I think he is working for a grocer over on Hastings Street; that is, working sometimes. He has all the primitive vices, and some others; but he has lost all the primitive virtues. He does not loaf any more; he does not know how; he does not dare to; he just sneaks a few minutes now and then furtively. He is ruined for life.

I accuse nobody in particular of Duff's downfall. I suppose it may be attributed to chance. But I think it rather excessive, rather superfluous, for Mrs. De Ruyter to say, as she said when she returned from Europe and learned the facts:

"It's really too bad, after all I did for that young man."

ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT

WHEN a good old-fashioned New Englander gets all shot up with this artistic temperament," said Dick Wallace, hitching his chair over nearer the window that looked out into Gramercy Park, "it's an awful thing. Now there's an idle richling over there in that green cage being perambulated around by a Swiss governess with a Worth bonnet and a Paul Poiret costume. Ten to one the kid's got a diamond on its finger as big as a marrowfat pea. That kid, when it grows up to the age of indiscretion, will have a legal right to acquire the artistic temperament. And the Southern races of Europe come by the artistic temperament naturally. They draw it with their first spoonfuls of cabbage soup. Even the Chinese—"

"Is this going to be a long one?" I asked.

"It is," replied Dick, "and you're going to hear it if I have to tie you into your chair."

Dick, who is a big athletic war correspondent (that is, he was a war correspondent when they permitted such things, which was before the

Japanese interned a group of eager newspaper men in Tokio and showed them pretty hand-painted silk work for seven or eight months' running), poised himself for a tiger spring.

"Oh, very well, I'll listen," I said. "Only let me sign for a few more cigars."

"The Chinese approximate it," continued Dick, "and I shouldn't wonder if the Samoan Islanders could rise to it in a few generations. But when a New Englander gets mixed up with the artistic temperament it's like entering an automobile truck for the James Gordon Bennett Cup. It can't win, and somebody's likely to get hurt."

"All this refers to some one in particular?" I suggested.

"You're a great little guesser; it does. It refers to none other than our hero, Mr. Warren Adams Peabody, lately my roommate and bad habit at 13½ Washington Square. You better take this all down. You're in the story-writing business, and every author must qualify sooner or later by writing a yarn about that intellectual boarding and baiting establishment at 13½ on the Square."

"I never take notes during an interview," I replied. "It scares timid people."

Dick is an old-timer in the newspaper business. He saw the point and grinned.

"Well, I took up with Warren Adams Peabody," he continued, "some time before he was bitten by this insect. He came down from the New England coast to conquer us with his pencil. And the boy could draw, too. He was original, and he had ideas—though, of course, like any youngster's, they were half-baked. I sublet my rooms to him the first summer, and when I came back I liked him so well I couldn't bear to turn him out. So we decided to try it together, the understanding being that the first one to get sick of the arrangement was to throw the other out the window."

"And he has left by the window," I said. "I see."

"He has left by the *door,*" growled Dick. "But that's the end of the story, and I'm just beginning. As I said, I liked this fellow Peabody. I liked his name. It was as ancient and rich in traditions as my dress suit. I used to regret sometimes that the name Quincy hadn't been handed to the lad. Warren *Quincy* Adams Peabody would have been even richer. But as it was, he was sumptuously endowed.

"I know a few people in the publishing business, so I was able to do something for the boy. I took him around and shot him into several offices over the heads of the doorkeepers, and he caught on. They threw down just enough of his work for his own good. Pretty soon he was making money and banking it. Banking it, understand? And when he went to the bank and gave them that name of his, I'll bet the president came out in person and shook him by the hand.

"Don't get the idea that Warren was mean. Not a bit of it. He just naturally had the New England spirit of thrift and conservatism. He would lend me a hundred without turning a hair. But I always gave him a note for it. Somehow there was that about him—you wouldn't be happy unless a note passed between you.

"Warren was slow making friends, like all his cool Northern kind. I'm as quick as lightning making friends, you know. I can average three friends to every cocktail. That's why I'm so poor. But Warren had to be pushed a little. So I pushed him.

"One of the places I pushed him into was the little French restaurant over in Twenty-seventh Street. Everybody worth knowing was bohem-

ing there. Art was flourishing in that smelly locality just then. Where's it flourishing now? I've been out of town for two months.

"I think it was the third night we went to the French place that I introduced Warren to Deborah Bradley. You've heard of her, of course. She's the little girl who came down here from Manchester, N. H., and did that snappy interview work for the *Standard.* She could write like an angel; and she had a way of remembering most of what people told her, and of fixing up the rest in such a way that they were glad to claim it when they saw it in print, even if they hadn't said it.

"It took some little nerve for me to introduce them, because I scarcely knew Deborah myself; but when I saw the way these two good New Englanders charmed each other, I knew I hadn't made any mistake. From the moment their eyes met you could see that they had formed a dual alliance, offensive and defensive, against the rest of the cruel world. I filled both my sleeves with subdued laughter—only I laughed prematurely, as I found out later.

"Deborah was more than good-looking. She was more than witty and intelligent. The girl

exhaled a kind of robust freshness and womanliness that two or three years in New York hadn't so much as blurred. I happen to know that there wasn't a single man on the *Standard* that wouldn't have dropped his best raincoat in the gutter, according to the etiquette laid down by Sir Walter Raleigh, and begged her to step on it. But nothing like that would have gone with Deborah, of course. She'd have looked at the man with her dry humor bubbling out of her eyes and said: 'Oh, my, you've spoiled that perfectly good eighteen-dollar coat, and I've got rubbers on, too.' A practical, everyday sort of a young woman!

"Deborah Bradley was taking a good deal of money away from the cashier at that time; and she was banking it too. It looked like straight running. Two solid New Englanders with money in the bank; two hearts that beat with rhythmic precision — and there goes my roommate! Wouldn't you have said so yourself? Certainly.

"For the first two or three months Warren and Deborah kept up a sort of polite show of interest in the rest of the people around them. But the time came when they couldn't spare each other

for more than ten minutes at a time, and even during that ten minutes they looked lonely and bored. Then the gossips got to work and planned it all out. They would spend their honeymoon somewhere on the East Side, studying sociology and making people happy. That's the modern idea, you know.

"But something else happened—the last thing in the world you'd expect. I was waiting for Warren to say some morning, with a great show of impersonality and a visible trembling of the hands and feet: 'What do you think of Deborah Bradley, Dick?' And then I was going to say: 'I think she's the worst ever, Warren,' and dodge whatever the boy might hurl at my head.

"He never asked the question. Instead, one morning, at bacon and eggs, he looked at me with a far-away look and said: 'I'm getting sick of this illustrating, Dick. It doesn't mean anything and it doesn't get anywhere. The only things that mean anything are what you feel, not what you think you see. I'm going in for Futurism. That's the coming art. I'm going to study under Franciano.'

" 'Good-by to the bank account,' I told him. 'Better wait until you've got a million, Warren,

and then you can found a school and have all kinds of fun with people.'

" 'Oh, if you don't want to be serious, I won't talk about it,' says Warren with a touchy snivel that was something new from him.

" 'Excuse me, Warren, but does Miss Bradley know about this shift in plans?' I asked him.

" 'She does, and she thinks it's the best move I ever made.'

"I thought it wasn't safe to call him a liar, but I couldn't believe that the sensible, homespun Deborah Bradley would take any stock in that brand of insanity. It didn't sound reasonable.

" 'Well,' I told him, 'maybe I'll have a good job by the time you're money runs out, and I'll support you the rest of your life.'

" 'You're a Philistine, like the rest of them,' was all he said.

"I met one of the *Standard* fellows a few days afterward. I asked him a lot of things I didn't care to know and one thing that I did want to know. That was about Deborah Bradley.

" 'Funny thing about her,' he says. 'She's thrown up her job and become an Anarchist.'

" 'An Anarchist!' I guess my voice must have slipped, because he says: 'Don't bawl that way

on the street, Dick! We'll be run in for obstructing traffic. I said *Anarchist,* and that's what I mean.'

" 'But she—' was all I could say.

" 'They all say the same thing,' says the reporter. 'They never get any farther than that. We're wondering whether the *Standard* office will be the first to be blown up.'

"After he went away I stood on the corner there trying to light a cigar without cutting the end off. I was dazed. When I came to I said to myself: 'There's nothing left for me but to take up the Montessori system and inhale cubeb.' Then I went home.

"When I came in Warren was lying on the bed. He said he had a headache. It was the first time I'd ever known him to have a headache. 'Would it bother you too much if I should disturb your headache with a foolish question?' I asked him.

"He thought it wouldn't, but he said it in a feeble way.

" 'Has Miss Bradley quit the *Standard?*'

"Warren nodded.

" 'Is there anything in this talk I hear about her becoming an Anarchist?'

"'A Philosophic Anarchist,' he says, laying stress on the qualifying adjective.

"'And it meets your approval?' I asked him weakly.

"'Entirely.'

"'Pull yourself together a few minutes, Warren, and come over to Paquin's. I want to talk to you.'

"He shook his head. 'I can't stand the music,' he says. 'It gets on my nerves.'

"And that was the first time I ever knew Warren had any nerves. I could see that he was entirely changed. Somewhere, somehow, he had been struck with the artistic temperament. And, say, it had riddled him! Not only that, but Deborah Bradley had got the same thing. It might have been the same volley that finished her, too. But they were both gone almost beyond hope.

"And now you know what I meant when I started by saying that when the good old-fashioned New Englander gets the artistic temperament it's an awful thing. They make a business of it. They make a religion of it. They go to excess with a sort of gloomy satisfaction. They throw overboard every last bit of cargo and jam on every yard of canvas.

"That's just what happened with these two poor children. Having divested herself of all her common sense, Deborah began making speeches and giving interviews that must have made her good parents up near Manchester turn stone cold if they heard of them. Mind, I'm not saying that there aren't a lot of nice people who look upon Philosophic Anarchy as a beautiful ideal that may come some time considerably hence. I'm not saying that Deborah hadn't a good many sharp retorts that went home to the smug and self-satisfied conservatives. I think she interviewed herself mostly, for the newspaper stories were full of her old-time cleverness. But there's no money in Philosophic Anarchy when you're sincere—and Deborah was a monument of sincerity. Her money began to emerge from the bank. She began to look a little shabby, compared with her former spruceness. And she began to be called 'queer.' And, you know, that's the beginning of the end when people call you 'queer.'

"Now, all this time Warren was going from bad to worse too. He couldn't illustrate any more. It was beneath him. He could have had all the work he could do, just on account of that

very attitude; but he was wrapped up in Futurism. He was one of the exhibitors at the Futurist Salon with a canvas entitled 'Passion.'

"Passion was a big red sphere with two light green eyes on it and riding on a purple ocean. He showed it to me before it went over to the exhibition, and I made so much fun of it that he wouldn't speak to me for a week.

"I don't know how I endured him for the next few months. His artistic temperament was all angles, and every time I moved I ran against a sharp corner. He threw away all the neckties he had that contained a suspicion of black. The crowd he was running with associated black with inefficiency. And he didn't want to be inefficient!

"I ought to have invited him to pack up his duds and go, but somehow I couldn't. We had got along so well together when he was sane that it seemed rank selfishness to turn him out when he was so sorely in need of a guardian.

"From what I could learn about his relations with Miss Bradley, I judged they were as much in love as ever. Only now when they got together they raved. He raved about the Art of the Future and she raved about Philosophic Anarchy, and they regularly converted each other

every time they met. I could see that the smash was coming. It came quicker than I thought it would.

"Have you ever passed a horrible night? Let me tell you about one. I was sitting in the rooms, reading, when Warren Adams Peabody dragged himself in. I had often wondered what authors meant by describing a man as looking 'haggard.' Now I know. Warren looked haggard in the light of my green reading lamp. He looked like a man that had been buried by mistake and exhumed at the last possible moment. He gave me one look and began to sob. 'God, Dick, it's all over!' was all I could understand.

"I always keep something in the house, merely for medicinal purposes. The trouble is so many people get sick around there that the bottle is nearly always empty. But I dosed what there was left into Warren in spite of the fact that he was an abstainer. It gagged him, but it also had the effect of loosening his tongue.

"He started to tell me what had happened. All of a sudden, though, he started to the window, threw it open, and climbed halfway out before I hauled him back by the scruff of his neck.

" 'You young fool,' I shouted to him, 'don't you know this is five stories from the ground? Don't you know what you'd look like when you struck the sidewalk? Ever hear of the morgue?"

" 'I don't care,' he says. 'It doesn't make any difference now.'

"He made two more attempts to get out the window before I threatened to maul him if he didn't stay in his chair. Then gradually I got out of him what had happened. He and Deborah had had a row—it was final, he said. There wasn't anything further in life for him.

"It seems that all the time our friend Warren had been cultivating the little eccentricities that go with the artistic temperament, Deborah Bradley had been doing the same thing. They had both been pampering that part of their constitutions they pleased to call their nerves. If they couldn't have their own sweet will about everything, they complained of their poor nerves. If Deborah wore a black hat, it shattered Warren's poor nerves; and if Warren spoke angrily to a waiter in a restaurant, Deborah's poor nerves were undone.

"Two hearts may beat as one, you understand, but two sets of nerves beat like six, and all out

of time, too. Having gone in strong for this sort of stuff, they played it to the limit; and as they had narrowed their sphere of operations they began to play mostly against each other.

"Well, the unlucky words were passed. Deborah said something sneering about the great Future Art, and Warren waxed sarcastic in respect to Philosophic Anarchy—and there you have it! They went rapidly in opposite directions. They were never, never going to see each other any more. The crystal vase of comradeship was busted. And Warren came home.

"I had a lot of sympathy for them both. They were both victims of a horrible mistake. They ought to have known that New Englanders weren't intended for this kind of etherealized tantrum. And that sympathy kept me up till three o'clock that morning pleading with Warren Adams Peabody not to jump out the window and not to open the drawer where his razor reposed.

"But when a man has sat up till three with this kind of a mental debauch, his sympathy sort of begins to ravel out. Mr. Warren made one more threat to go out the window, and then I took a chance on nailing a possible bluff. I

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went over to the window before he could get there and threw it open with a crash. 'There,' I bawled to him, 'you jump out and be hanged! I'll call up Bellevue and have the ambulance start ahead of time. Go on, jump! Jump, why don't you? You haven't the nerve, you miserable little faker! You're afraid you might sprain your self-esteem! Why don't you jump?'

"Pale as the boy was, he had enough blood left to make two big blotches of shame on his cheeks. 'You're right, Dick,' he says. 'I'm a coward. I might have done it the first time, but I can't now. Please let me go to bed. I'm a wreck.'

"'You ought to be a wreck!' I said to him. 'You're an idiot! You've thrown away the best chances anybody ever had. You've helped one of the finest girls in the world to make a fool of herself. You'd better go to bed! And tomorrow you'd better go to work, even if it's sweeping streets.'

"I pulled of my clothes and turned in, and slept like a log. I looked around timidly, though, when I got up in the morning, to see if Warren was still there. There was just a possibility that he might jump after all. But he hadn't.

He was sound asleep and snoring softly. That made me mad. He might have at least had the decency to pass a sleepless morning.

"Right then, that very day, I ought to have helped him pack up his duds and seek some cozy little hall room in a boarding house. But do you know, that young varmint had somehow coiled himself all around me. In regard to him I had come to have all the feelings of a fond papa. That's why, in the next few days, he was able to make such a monkey of me.

"Monkey of me? Well, say! I was no better than a combination governess and messenger boy. He had me running errands and feeding him in bed and throwing away my black neckties. The only excuse I can offer for such asininity on my part is that he did certainly look sick. And he had a bad cough that scared me.

" 'Dick,' he says the second day, 'I wish you'd do something for me.'

"I asked him what it was.

" 'I know it's a good deal to ask,' he says.

" 'I'll decide that. What is it?' I told him.

" 'I'd like to know how *she's* getting along. I'm nervous about *her*. Do you think you could find out—'

"I suspected his game. He wanted to be told that Deborah was wearing sackcloth and ashes and pulling out her hair from grief. I told him so. But he denied it.

"Well, I did a little detective work for the lad. And what did I find out? Nothing but that Miss Deborah Bradley was interned in her room and closely guarded by two stalwart female friends, who were shaking their heads in sorrowful negative every time she begged for prussic acid. In other words, she was going through the same rigmarole of nerves as Warren Adams Peabody—and probably worse, owing to her sex.

"Was I going back and flatter that young scamp by telling him the truth? I guessed not! 'Warren,' I said to him, with a straight and honest countenance, 'I'm afraid you've put your trust in the wrong place. I'm afraid the girl is fickle. She's going about her business as though nothing had happened. She's planning to make an open-air speech in Union Square to-morrow night.'

"Warren Adams Peabody forgot himself so far as to sit up in bed. 'Is that true?' he says, in a husky voice.

" 'Do I ever lie?' I fenced.

"That afternoon he was able to take his nourishment sitting up. He began to talk more freely about business matters. One thing he told me surprised me. He said he had spent practically every penny of his savings in the Futurist game. What he hadn't been honestly mulcted of he had lent to Futurist friends, who were going to pay him when the Future became the Present. Judge, oh, ye gods! how that New England spirit had been squelched! He hadn't even taken a note from them!

"It made me wonder if Deborah Bradley had been equally improvident. I asked Warren. He finally admitted that he thought she had given too generously to the cause. Then he sighed. 'It's all over,' he says. 'I hope she does well, though.'

"It was amazing the way that boy began to mend. Whether it was the false report that I had brought to him about Deborah, or whether it was the realization that he was short of money, I don't know. But now that he was able to sit up he began to take notice.

"While we were talking the telephone rang. 'If it's for me, I'm not at home,' says Warren.

" 'Do you think the whole world is exclusively

interested in you?' I snarled. 'It might be for me by some mistake.'

"It *was* for me. It was a friend of Deborah's. She wanted to know how Warren was getting along. She was requested to ask.

" 'He's as chipper as a sparrow,' I told her. 'Turning out more work than he ever did in his life. We're just dressing for a dinner party. Good-by.'

" 'Who was it?' says Warren, bursting with curiosity.

" 'It was Pontius Pilate, asking for a friend of his named Barabbas,' I told him. But I'll bet there was something doing on the other end of the line. I'll bet when Miss Deborah Bradley heard what I said she sat up in bed, too.

"We had supper served in the apartment. Warren ate with a new relish. Afterward he thought he felt strong enough to smoke a cigar. The nicotine made him placid and contemplative. Then I was ready to tell him something I had been mulling over all the afternoon.

" 'Warren,' I said, 'I suppose you know that you and Deborah are public characters to some extent? You've been featured in the newspapers. I mean, as being among the leaders

of your special fads—excuse me, I mean movements.'

"'What of it?' he asked drearily, recalled to his sorrow.

"'You're dead broke, you say. Do you know there's a first-page newspaper story in the breaking of your—er—engagement—and the *Standard* would probably buy a "tip"—'

"'Dick!' he screamed, leaping out of his chair and looking like a demon. 'Do you know what you are saying? You monster! You want me to sell the *Standard* a tip on my own misery—ugh! I didn't think it of you! I didn't!'

"'Wait a minute,' I said to him. 'Don't go so fast. You know as well as I do that the papers will get the story. They'll play it up for all it's worth, and give it a humorous twist that will tear both your reputations to shreds. The more they work in the dark the worse you'll suffer. If should you give them the plain facts—'

"Warren pounded his fist on the table. 'Not another word, Dick!' he shouted.

"'Oh, yes, one or two more words, Warren,' I said. 'They might pay twenty-five dollars for the tip. If the city editor was feeling rich he

might make it fifty. And they'd get the truth —not a mess of imaginary comic details. And you're dead broke—dead broke, mind you. You could use the money just as well as some fellow who hasn't anything but a monetary interest. You owe it to yourself—and to Deborah—to get there first. Take your time and think it over calmly.'

"Warren was silent. I could see that he was permitting himself to consider the possibility. He took out a pencil and a piece of paper and made some calculations.

" 'Room rent's due to-morrow,' I suggested to help him along.

"Warren looked at me helplessly. 'Do you honestly think it would be right?' he asked.

" 'How could I suggest it otherwise?' I said.

" 'Somehow it doesn't seem the square thing —trading on such an affair,' he objected.

" 'Oh, well, do as you please,' I told him. 'You know best.'

"He thought it over some more. Then he shook his head. 'No, I couldn't do it.'

" 'Very well, forget it,' I said.

"We sat there smoking a while without saying a word. Then Warren got up and walked

around the room. Finally he said: 'Well, do you know that city editor personally?'

"I told him I did.

" 'Perhaps you're right, Dick,' says Warren. 'I put myself in your hands. Take me down there. Only—'

" 'Only what—'

" 'Get the biggest price you can for it, Dick,' he says. And there was a queer glint in his eyes just the same, I suppose, as was in the eyes of his ancestors when they used to trade horses outside the general store back in New England. The artistic temperament was retreating.

"I hustled the lad into his clothes and we took the subway downtown. Two or three times on the way he changed his mind and pleaded to be allowed to go back to the room and eat out his heart in silent sorrow. But he made no move toward the door when the train stopped at stations. The temperament was still moving backward, though slowly.

"I left Warren in the outside waiting room at the *Standard* office and went in to see Jerome Stull, the city editor. Jerome was an old pal of mine and I could talk to him like an uncle. Only you have to be careful with those old pals;

they'll pay you only half as much as they would a stranger. The rest is taken out in friendship.

"'I've got a good little first-page story, Jerome,' I told him. 'It's something you can cut loose a good writer on and make all kinds of a sensation with. How much?'

"'No pigs in pokes, Dick,' says Stull. 'Let's hear it. I'll pay well for good stuff. But no dreams go here.'

"'I'll tell you,' I said. 'Only, if you shouldn't happen to want it, you'll forget it, and I'll go over to the *Times-Star*. He nodded agreement.

"'It's about Warren Adams Peabody, the leader of the Futurist Art movement,' I began, 'and Miss Bradley, the philosophic anarchist. Good, funny yarn. First page story. How they got—'

"'Wait, Dick!' says Jerome. 'Don't exert yourself. Look at this!'

"Stull pulled a proof off a hook and passed it to me. I nearly fainted. The *Standard* already had the story—in type—ready for the morning edition.

"'Good enough for me,' I told him. 'You've

got it all. Do you mind telling me who sold you the tip?'

"Stull's face was like a stone image. 'You know I can't tell any such thing,' he said. 'You ought to know better than to ask, an old newspaper man like you.'

" 'On my bended knees, I ask you, Jerome,' I said to him. 'On my honor as a gentleman, I swear by all the gilded cafés we have sat together in, the information will remain with me. Who was it?'

"Stull shook his head. 'I can't tell you,' he said. 'But you ought to have discernment enough to guess.'

" 'Miss Bradley?' I gasped.

" 'Ask me no more,' said Stull. 'You know as well as I do that Miss Bradley was one of our old stars. Close the door when you go out.'

"I went out and took Warren by the arm. 'Not a word!' I told him. 'Don't lisp until we get home.'

"When we got back to Washington Square, and sat down and breathed more freely, I said to Warren: 'Couldn't get a cent, old chap. They had the story already. Somebody else got there first. Tough luck.'

"Warren wasn't much affected by the information. Perhaps he was rather glad that, after all, it had come from another quarter. He asked carelessly: 'I wonder who could have told them?'

"'*Deborah Bradley!*' I said.

"I kept one eye on the window, to prevent another real attempt in that direction. I got ready to sprinkle cold water on him in case he should collapse. I might have saved myself the trouble. All of a sudden the boy began to laugh. He hadn't laughed for weeks, and it echoed through the room in an uncanny way. It was no hysterical laugh, either. It was the solid, boisterous haw-haw of a care-free and joyous soul.

"He got up, nearly choking with mirth, and slapped me on the shoulder. 'Dick,' he said, 'she's a wonder! She beat us to it! She didn't let the grass grow under her feet a minute. It's rich! It's a scream!'

"I caught the laughter from the lad, and the more we laughed the funnier it seemed. The telephone jangled. It was the janitor asking us please to remember the other people in the house. And when Warren went to bed he was like a

man reborn. All he needed, I guess, was a good laugh."

"And so that's the end of the romance," I said.

"Maybe the end of the romance," replied Dick Wallace. "But not the end of the story. They were married to-day."

"Who were married to-day? What do you mean?"

"Warren and Deborah. I told you Warren left our little home by the *door*. So he did this morning. They took the Savannah boat at noon. And this is the way it happened, as Warren told it to me:

"The next morning—the morning the *Standard* came out with the story—Warren sailed over to the house where Deborah lived and sent up his card in the most formal way. She received him also formally. He started right in without mincing words. 'How much did you get for selling that tip to the *Standard?*' says he.

"She blushed rosy. But she was game. She never let an eyelash quiver. 'Sixty dollars. You see,' she added, 'I used to work for the *Stand-*

ard, and they wanted to treat me nicely. Nobody else could have got nearly that much.'

" 'It was half my story, anyway,' said Warren. 'It looks like 50 per cent. proposition to me, as a matter of fairness.'

"She thought a minute. Then she said: 'You're right.' And she got out her purse and told off thirty dollars. Warren counted it over and put it carefully in his pocketbook. Then he said: 'I tried to sell them the tip myself, Deborah. But you got there first. It was a regular Yankee trick. I'd like to marry a girl like you.'

" 'You did pretty well yourself, Warren,' she says with glowing eyes. 'You were a little slow, that's all. You're a Yankee, too. I'd marry a man like you if he showed the least little bit of common sense about it.'

" 'Will you, Deborah?' says he.

" 'Yes, Warren,' says she.

"That's all there is to it. It was like trading. They liked it that way. What chance has the Artistic Temperament when two New England Yanks have had it and recovered? What chance has Futurism or Philosophic Anarchy? I'll wager that to-day Warren and Deborah don't remember that such things exist."

O PERFECT LOVE!

THERE is a village on Cape Cod, not far from where the *Mayflower* put ashore its first cargo of antique furniture. In this village for more than two centuries and a half, the best families have never married into any but the other best families. As the number of best families allotted to any one village is limited, relationships were not long in becoming extremely complex.

The last remaining member of the best families of this Cape Cod village was removed to an institution recently, after he had walked into the post office clad in a union suit unadorned. The best family is now that of a Portuguese who came to this country in 1892. He has done well in cranberry growing and has a number of automobile tires laid by for a rainy day.

The foregoing is by way of being a parable. It is not inevitably apposite; in truth, it is offered as a sort of literary lagnappe to those that read what follows.

The father and mother of Sibyl Curtess were advanced persons. Old man Curtess was in the leather business, but he had time for other interests; and one of his interests was eugenics. Eugenics being a broad subject, he had specialized on Sibyl; and it must be admitted that he, with the assistance of Sibyl's mother, had done pretty well.

In the first place, Sibyl was beautiful. Even the women of Borton said so. Her beauty was almost without flaw. People—the ruder folks—used to express wonder about this phenomenon, for Sibyl's mother was plain, and old man Curtess, owing to an eccentricity in the facial and hirsute scheme, somewhat resembled a walrus.

But Sibyl Curtess was not merely beautiful. She was ruggedly healthy. And not only that; she was intelligent besides. Life seemed to have labored to bring forth a supertype in the person of this girl. So far as beauty, health and mind were concerned, Life had done well.

It was part of Mr. Curtess's plan not to bring up his child in ignorance of life. Mrs. Curtess, being equally advanced, concurred in this determination. One of the consequences was that when Sibyl was fourteen she knew so much about

the human species that her conversation might bring a blush to the cheek of a veteran anatomist.

Borton was not a large town. Over most of the dinner tables in Borton, when mixed company sat, the talk was guarded, and some subjects were taboo. At the Curtess home no subject was taboo. Discussion was open. Old man Curtess was wont to brag that he had no secrets from his family. Some years later it was discovered that he had a small checking account with a bank in Springfield, not hitherto advertised. But this was a small matter.

One night, at the evening meal, when Sibyl was away from home, old man Curtess suddenly laid down his knife and fork, took off his spectacles, polished them with breath and handkerchief and hemmed. This operation was always preliminary to an important communication, and Mrs. Curtess looked expectant.

"What do you think of that Laughton boy, Grace?" asked old man Curtess.

"I know what you're thinking of," was the reply.

"Very likely. But what do you think of him?"

"In regard to Sibyl?"

"Of course."

Mrs. Curtess sighed. "I like the idea," she replied. "In fact, Will, you know as well as I do there's nobody else. All the rest in this town are impossibles, and most of those out of town are just as impossible."

"Sibyl's only sixteen," went on Curtess, "but it's none too early to plan. Now, to my mind, young Laughton is a perfect mate. You know what I mean."

Mrs. Curtess knew indeed. They spoke of marriage always as mating, being good eugenists. They were not cold-blooded about it, however. Much as the eugenist dreads accident, he admits love. And this was the basis of the sigh from Mrs. Curtess. She knew Sibyl's opinion of Ernest Patterson Laughton.

"She doesn't like him," said Mrs. Curtess.

"Rot. She's only sixteen. She doesn't know what she wants yet. We don't want to marry the girl off. We merely want to lay plans. And, to my mind, it's none too early to begin. We've seen enough cases where—"

Mrs. Curtess nodded.

"He's physically sound, well educated, and he'll have a good business of his own some day; and

that's not to be sneezed at," went on Curtess with enthusiasm. "His habits are the very best; I know that on good authority. He enters Harvard this fall; and they say he leads the class in scholarship. And he's no mollycoddle, either. No mollycoddle could be captain of the football team in his third year in high school. It seems to me, Grace, that he's simply ideal for—for a eugenic marriage. Now, if our Sibyl—"

"That's just the trouble, Will. Sibyl said to me the other day (and I hadn't even mentioned him, either) that she 'couldn't stand that Laughton fellow.' Those were her words."

"Did she give any reason?"

"Well, she said something about his being a bore."

"Nothing else?"

"No, I think not."

Old man Curtess puffed his cheeks full of air, and then expelled it from a pleased mouth. It did not strike him that being a bore was a sinister thing, in the face of so many patent merits. If he had been a highly imaginative man, it might have occurred to him that the superman, when achieved, will probably be a bore. But he was not highly imaginative.

"Well, she's still young," was the rather uneasy comment of the mother.

"Oh, yes; time enough to think it over."

During the week following this conversation Sibyl discovered that she was in love with a young man named Richard O'Malley. She had had no secrets from her father and mother—until now. As to this revelation she decided to wait a little while, on the reasonable ground that it might prove to be a false alarm. Not every high-school girl would be so philosophical about it; but Sibyl had grown up in an advanced atmosphere. So she told nobody—not even Dick O'Malley.

Dick O'Malley was from one of Borton's worst families. He was a thin, dark-haired, short lad, not over-well favored in any point of physical development. His cheeks, and more particularly his eyes, showed a marked tendency toward tuberculosis, of which his mother had died. His father had died several years before of what would have been called, in better social circles, cirrhosis, but which was described in the instance of the late father O'Malley as alcoholism. Or, in the Saxon directness of Borton, simply "drink."

Altogether, poor little Dick O'Malley was the least eugenic member of his class in the high school. Sibyl had heard enough at home to know that she should not fall in love with anybody whose vital statistics were like those of Dick O'Malley; and yet, at the age of sixteen and odd, that is just what she did. If asked why, she could probably have given but one coherent reason: he was not a bore.

Sibyl kept the matter in her heart for some days, and then one afternoon it occurred to her that she was betraying the confidence of her parents. Both her father and mother had often said to her: "Sibyl, no matter what you think or feel, don't be afraid to tell us. We shall understand." She felt that she should have gone to them directly. The next best thing was to take Dick O'Malley home with her and speak her mind freely in the presence of her parents.

It is one thing to plan to take a young man like Dick O'Malley to one's home, and quite another to get him to go thither. The Curtess family lived on Ruggles Street, which was the Fifth Avenue of Borton, considering the real Fifth Avenue as it was before Trade sneaked in and began to advertise fire-and-water sales of

high-priced articles. The Reardons, with whom Dick boarded, resided on lower Main Street, in unhygienic proximity to a soap rendering factory, a vicinage further socially cursed by the presence of a gashouse. The first effort of Sibyl got Dick as far as the post office. On another occasion he went to the corner of Ruggles and North Main, carrying Sibyl's school books. This wild excess of gallantry was observed, and it was pleasantly advertised, in the freemasonic circles of high-school life, that Miss Curtess had a "crush" on Dick O'Malley.

One evening, just before supper time, when Mr. Curtess had got into slippers to read the Boston *Transcript* (a journal never intended to be perused with the boots on), Sibyl came in with Dick in tow. She had discovered the way to do it, at last. A simple plan: that of having a large parcel-post package arrive opportunely, and inviting her escort to bring it along.

"Father," said the young woman, speaking with the frankness and directness which had always brought a premium in the Curtess household, "this is Dick O'Malley."

Old man Curtess looked up and down the person of the youthful visitor. The expression of

his face showed that he was not pleased with what his daughter had brought home with her. But he said, simply, "Ah? Very glad to see you, young man," and wondered whether the proprieties demanded the proffer of a gratuity in the form of supper.

"He is in my class in school," said the miss, "and I love him very much."

The information, so sincerely uttered, was electric. Two explosions followed. Mr. Dick, who had been standing awkwardly at the door, turned quickly and made his escape from the house the way he had come, nearly keeling over Mrs. Curtess when she loomed in his path. He stopped running only when he had rounded the corner of the street.

Mr. Curtess rose from his chair as if a hand from above had seized him by the coat collar. "What!" he shouted.

The result of her announcement disconcerted Sibyl. It had not occurred to her that Dick O'Malley would bolt; and it had not even occurred to her that her father would rise—in that manner—and say "What!" So she burst out crying.

"Is this a joke?" asked old man Curtess. He

knew well enough it was no joke. Jokes are not usually accompanied by floods of tears.

There was no reply.

"Well, I'm damned!" was the next comment.

Mrs. Curtess came in with a "What's the matter, Sibyl?" No reply to that. Then, "What's the matter with her, Will?"

"Do you know anything about this—John—O'Malley?" asked Curtess. It was the meanest thing he could think of—to call the youth out of his name.

"Dick," corrected Sibyl, not too far gone to defend her ideal. "Richard."

"I never heard of him," replied Mrs. Curtess, stooping to gather up the straying pages of his newspaper. Then, as Sibyl would not repeat in the presence of a hostile audience, Curtess repeated for her.

Between that time and eleven o'clock Sibyl made some important discoveries about the rules governing advanced thought and conduct. She found out that the injunction to speak and think frankly upon all subjects was modified by another injunction, hitherto unmentioned, not to speak or think of "unworthy" things. Among the unworthy things was Dick.

By half past eight it was a foregone conclusion that young O'Malley would go the way of his father. At nine o'clock Mr. Curtess avowed himself an open-minded man, no dictator. At half past nine some words were spoken to the effect that one should think of the future of the race. At eleven Sibyl went to bed, her romance having been interred under six sodfeet of eugenics. Love likes silence, silent places, unspoken communion. Talk is rank poison to it. At eleven Sibyl affixed her gum to the side of the toilet table and went to sleep, and dreamed about falling out of a balloon.

Five years afterward Ernest Patterson Laughton had been graduated from college and into his father's business, Sibyl had become a eugenist in her own right and Dick O'Malley had become a chauffeur.

Young Laughton (he had been called "a perfect specimen of manhood" by the director of the Y. M. C. A. gymnasium) had improved mentally and physically. It seemed impossible that nature could have done it all alone; in fact, Mr. and Mrs. Laughton doubted it. Ernest had one of those faces which, about that time, was making

the twenty-five-dollar suit famous. That is to say, the angular fair, high-brushed hair, slightly wavy, and the pinkish color that cries health. He took cold baths—ice cold—every morning.

Dick O'Malley did not look well. He had one of those faces that are always navy blue, owing to a dark, intensive growth of beard; he was miserably thin; his habits were said to be such as the school physiology textbooks aim to prevent. Yet he was a good chauffeur. The Laughtons, for whom he drove, spoke of him in the highest terms of praise; that is, they said they had no complaint to make against him.

Sibyl had grown more beautiful, more intelligent, more ideally eugenic. She was enthusiastic, now, for race improvement. She knew Mendel by heart; perfectly understood the theory of the breeding of peas, and arguing from the well known fact that human beings are but animate peas, worked out a charming result. She looked forward to a perfect race, the equals of the gods of mythology.

Old man Curtess had not been idle. He had cemented a relationship business and social between the two families. It was agreed, even while Ernest was in college, that this would be

the rapturously successful and scientific match. It was necessary, first, to fix the young man's position. He must get started in business, build a suitable house upon a proper site, and perform all the prenuptial duties of a man who expects to be married but once. He had also, in the interests of his business, to join several secret societies founded upon the idea of unselfish brotherhood. So that he was twenty-four years old and Sibyl was twenty-two when they were engaged.

For they were engaged. Everybody expected it; it was the subject that Borton always fell back on when the clock began to be audible. The Borton *Gazette* wrote, using no names, about a certain "youthful friendship that had ripened into love." This perfect mating seemed certain to eventuate. Mr. and Mrs. Laughton desired it. Ernest Laughton desired it. Mr. and Mrs. Curtess desired it. Sibyl, as a eugenist, desired it. Borton demanded it.

To Sibyl there was but one drawback. She saw the marriage in its scientific aspects, and it pleased her. She felt a responsibility for future ages; and that was very satisfying. But for the present, the imminent *now,* she acknowl-

edged to herself in the recesses of her closet that she did not feel attracted by the personality of Ernest. Strive as she would to keep down the suggestion, she was forced to admit that he was still a bore—even more of a bore than ever. Into the catalogue of his perfections, that one item intruded itself and overshadowed the rest. Naturally, she made no inquiries for her soul. In the first place, she did not presuppose a soul; and then, she was not concerned with love, but with Mendel. She was a student, and she had academic zeal.

It happened one day, as Sibyl was in her room with her spring clothes, that Mrs. Curtess came breathlessly to the door and exclaimed: "Now don't be worried, dear. Ernest wasn't hurt a bit. But his automobile has just been in an accident. It was the driver that was hurt, so somebody said. I haven't got all the details."

"The driver? Dick O'Malley?"

"I suppose so. I heard somebody say that the man that was driving the car was taken to the hospital. The accident happened in Leicester."

Suddenly Sibyl saw the thin, bluish face of little Dick O'Malley; and in the same moment there

flashed into her mind the picture of herself bringing Dick home one evening to declare her love. She fancied him lying on the ground, bleeding. . . .

Sibyl ran to the telephone and called one of the local florists. "Make me up a big bunch of flowers to send to a friend in the hospital. . . . No, I don't know which hospital it is, yet; it's an accident. . . . Yes. . . . No; ten dollars' worth will be all right. . . . I'll tell you where to send them as soon as I find out. . . . Good-by."

She got into her street clothes hastily. To her mother she said:

"I'm going to run down street and find out what hospital they've taken the driver to. We couldn't do less, you know." She did not care to tell her mother that she was on her way to the hospital in person. But just as she was going out the street door, her father came in. He was puffing hard with excitement, although he had driven up from his office in the car. "Easy, now, Sibyl," he said. "You're a clever girl, so I can tell you without beating round the bush. Ernest is hurt—not badly, I hope. Auto accident. Dammit, they're getting altogether too

common these days. He's at the hospital. Now don't get all shot to pieces about it. It may not be serious at all."

"But—but they said it was the driver that was hurt."

"Oh, you've heard? Well, Ernest was driving the car himself at the time."

"Oh!" was Sibyl's reply.

Her father drove away immediately, promising to telephone as soon as he heard the details. Soon afterward Sibyl went out, too. From the telephone pay station at the nearest drug store she telephoned to the florist.

"Have you made up that order for Miss Curtess yet? . . . Well, please change it to a bunch for about two dollars and a half."

"I mustn't be so impulsive," Sibyl said to herself as she came out of the drug store. "Ten dollars for flowers is quite absurd." And she somehow convinced herself that this move was prompted by pure economy.

Laughton's injuries were not serious, and the marriage took place a short time afterward. Some marriages are undoubtedly made in heaven; from which we may conclude that heaven enjoys its little joke now and then. But

this marriage was made in Borton. It was stamped with the hall-mark of Borton gossip, Borton conventions, Borton romance. Borton cared not a bit for eugenics; Borton did not know what the word meant; but Borton knew two ideal specimens of human being when it saw them, and knew that this pair was "meant for each other." It was not a large town; nearly everybody knew everybody permissible to know. Borton felt that it had brought this couple up by hand.

They were married. It was what is called a "quiet wedding," presumably because no dynamite is employed. The high contracting parties frowned upon the use of rice, old shoes and fishhorns; but science and refinement both must give way to a powerful local sentiment. The Æolus Male Quartet sang several songs, among which was the classic: "O Perfect Love!" The aptness of this selection was duly commented upon.

Sibyl and Ernest, being refined persons, refrained from quarreling during their honeymoon. Besides, there was a novelty about their situation which acted as a shock absorber for a time. But, the last day at Niagara Falls, they found it irk-

some to be polite. They cut short the trip and went home.

This ebb tide, after the full-moon flow of nuptial excitement, has been all explained by the psychologists. It is a reaction that wears off. So it did in the case of this eugenic pair; and before long they were on speaking terms, as happy couples should be. Then they settled down to be good Bortonians.

It was only after she was married that Sibyl discovered what a monster of perfection this Laughton was. He was absolutely without blemish. She had dared surmise, when they were engaged, that he had some secret sin or disability. It was not so. He did not smoke or use spirituous liquors. He took gymnastic exercises every morning. He never spilled anything on the tablecloth. He never made a bad bargain in business. He infallibly lifted his hat, even to his wife. He could spell all words. His health was perfect. He dressed in the quiet dignity of plain, expensive tailored clothes.

Against this array of matchless attributes Sibyl had only her own perfections to fall back upon. She could do nothing for this man. He needed nothing from any woman. He was complete in

himself, so far as any man could be. There was a woman, next door but one, married to a cripple, who had to be wheeled around in a chair. Sibyl used to feast her eyes on this man in the chair, and a great feeling of envy came into her heart. . . . She almost made up her mind once to borrow the cripple for the afternoon, and wheel him around.

Not only did the physical perfection of her husband jar upon Sibyl, but his high mental and moral qualities constantly annoyed her. Ardently she began to wish that he might come home drunk. He turned up from the office every evening at five thirty, persistently sober; or, if unavoidably delayed, he always sent a telegram. Another thing that grated: he never failed to post letters. There was something unhuman about the man, Sibyl thought.

She found a letter in his pocket once, signed with a woman's name, but it proved to be a sort of second cousin, who, moreover, was freckled and kept a parrot.

Nor was Sibyl unaware of the fact that her own sterling qualities often palled upon Ernest. She felt that if she tried hard enough she might be able to overcome her perfection—even to the

extent of doing something shockingly bad; but she had no enthusiasm for the experiment. As time went on, she began to wonder about Mendel's veracity. . . .

Ernest Laughton came home one evening with a sardonic grin on his handsome face. "Who do you suppose is going to get married?" he asked.

Sibyl didn't want to guess. So Ernest replied to his own question: "Father's chauffeur, Dick O'Malley."

"No!" replied Sibyl, in an astonished way; and yet, when she considered the matter, she realized that Dick was just as likely to get married as anybody else. "To whom?" she asked.

"I think it's a girl named—Higgins, or some name like that. Nobody we know. I tell you, there ought to be a law to prevent people like that from getting married. There's Dick—he hasn't a cent, and no insurance company would take a ten-day risk on him. Father is going to get him a black suit; otherwise he'd have to get married in his driver's costume."

"I suppose other people besides us have human feelings," replied Sibyl, with a slight asperity that Ernest was too preoccupied to observe.

"I know *this,*" replied Ernest, "that it's just such people that keep the almshouse full—and the people pay the taxes."

"They might spend their money worse," was Sibyl's reply; and something in her voice and manner warned the peace-loving husband that he was not talking with a taxpayer.

"We're invited to the wedding," Ernest continued with a laugh. "Want to go?"

"Of course we'll go."

Ernest was genuinely surprised. "You're joking!"

"Joking? Of course not. Don't you want to go?"

"Why—yes, if you do. Only I didn't suppose—"

"We ought to go. It's only common decency," was the final word on the subject.

It was so; Dick O'Malley was going to be married. He had decided to take advantage of the fact that all men are created equal. To do this it had become necessary to turn Methodist, but Dick was of an elastic and philosophic disposition. He had more good nature and a larger sense of humor than any other three men in Borton. Miss Wiggin (not Higgins, as Ernest

Laughton had said) was the daughter of an unsuccessful butcher, now deceased.

"The wedding was at the home of the bride's mother. The bride was gowned in a white all-over Hamburg, and carried a bouquet of roses, the single ring service being used." This quotation was from the Borton *Gazette* of the following Friday.

The "young" Laughtons were present, that is, Sibyl and Ernest. The "old" Laughtons had a previous engagement to remain at home; and were represented by proxy of Dick's black suit. Dick looked pretty well, sartorially, but not at all well physically. And the bride proved to be a little emaciated, overworked girl that might have been blown away by any high wind.

"They don't either of them look as though they would last through the year," whispered Ernest to Sibyl.

"But they look happy," replied Sibyl. And they did. Dick was full of fun. He even made fun of the minister. And Millie Wiggin had never in her poor little life had such a draught of joy.

There was no quartet of male voices; but

Mrs. Wiggin had a phonograph, nearly paid for, and "many appropriate selections" were played, if we may trust the account in the *Gazette.* One of these was familiar to Ernest and Sibyl. It was 'O Perfect Love!"

Sibyl and Ernest went home early, and spent a rather solemn two hours before going to bed. Ernest was wondering how on earth people in such miserable circumstances could show such gaiety; how, in fact, they dared get so much fun out of things in general, and out of a wedding in particular.

"Curious, pinched little creature, isn't she?" he remarked, referring to the newly made Mrs. O'Malley.

"Yes," replied Sibyl absently. Then she yawned. Ernest had never in his highest flights of boresomeness seemed quite such a bore as at this moment.

Three years afterward, Sibyl Laughton was walking down Main Street in Borton on a bright, warm Sunday afternoon in June. She was dressed in black, and her only companion was a chow dog of the most approved type. Ernest, not unlike many other highly developed, physi-

cally perfect men, had succumbed to typhoid several weeks before. That magnificent constitution, which seemed likely and fit to endure forever, had withered under the first attack. Sibyl was a widow.

At the corner, where she turned to go up her own street, she met a man wheeling a baby carriage, followed closely by a little woman and two children. Deep in thought, Sibyl did not observe these people, and stepped aside to let the baby carriage pass; but a hearty, pleasant voice cried, "Good afternoon, Mrs. Laughton!" and a hat was lifted.

It was Dick O'Malley—with his family. Dick was still driving old man Laughton's car. Married life had spruced him up; even his beard seemed not so atrociously blue. He was still thin, but his eyes were brighter and healthier in tone.

Mrs. O'Malley's married life had improved her, also. She had taken on more weight, and her cheeks glowed with well-being. Sibyl observed that the two older children were bright little people, and that the infant in the carriage was sucking its thumb in manifest content.

"Why, Dick!" she exclaimed. "What a family man you are, aren't you?"

Dick jammed his thumbs into his waistcoat pockets with honest pride. "I certainly am," he replied. "This is the first time I've seen you, Mrs. Laughton, since—"

"Yes, I haven't been out much of late." She accepted the condolences hastily, and began trying to play with the children. But the children became frightened and held aloof behind their mother's skirts, and when Dick ordered them to play with the lady, they refuse. About this time Mrs. O'Malley began to tug gently at Dick's coat sleeve, and he, interpreting the signal correctly, remarked, "Well, I suppose we must be getting along home."

Sibyl opened her hand bag and took a bill from her purse. "For the little folks, you know," she explained.

They went in opposite directions; the O'Malley family of two adults and three young, and Sibyl and the chow dog.

When the parties were out of earshot of each other, Mrs. O'Malley said: "I don't like that woman, Dick."

"Why not?" asked Dick, surprised.

"Didn't I see her making sheep's eyes at you? You can't fool a woman about those things. Maybe you didn't notice it, but I did."

"Pooh!" said Dick. Nevertheless he was not ill pleased. "Well," he added, "anyway, she seems to be pretty fond of children."

But Mrs. O'Malley was not to be appeased. "Let her get some of her own, then," she said.

THE OPTIMIST

THE insurance ran out the day before John Dick's farmhouse and barns burned; the week before he had fallen from a stone wall and sprained his ankle, so that it was cased in plaster of Paris; and his hired men had just got in the Summer's crop of hay a few days before the fire. Nothing was saved from the fire except John Dick and his mother; not a bit of furniture, not an heirloom, not a loaf of bread, and it was only by quick and courageous efforts that the neighbors brought John Dick out of the house. And then, in their excitement—it being in the dead of night—they laid him down carefully alongside a stone wall, on a bed of poison ivy.

Yet, when a neighbor, with a lump of sympathy in his throat, came to John Dick with consolatory words, the latter smiled, shifted his sprained ankle over to a more comfortable position, and replied, "It might have been worse."

"You take it easy, I must say," said the neigh-

bor. "I'd be almost crazy, if I was in your place."

"I always did try to look on the bright side of things," replied John Dick. "The darkest cloud has a silver lining."

There was another test awaiting the optimism of John Dick; perhaps it was the supreme test. He was engaged to be married, in September, to Alice Randall, daughter of a merchant in the village. Miss Randall, seemingly with considerable reluctance and real regret, now begged to be released from her promise.

John Dick winced when he heard the young woman's hesitating words. But he braced himself and replied, "I don't blame you at all, Alice. It'll take a long time for me to get into a position—"

"That isn't it, John. Honest it isn't," interrupted the girl. "It isn't a question of money —or anything like that. It's something else. Something I don't know just how to say. Only, when your house burned, and you lost everything—" The girl stopped, embarrassed.

"Yes?" suggested John Dick.

"John, I can't tell you. I'll tell you sometime. But not now."

All this happened forty years ago. John Dick was then twenty-nine; Alice Randall was twenty-three; a good many of those who knew them both are no longer taxpayers in East Walbridge. But there were left, in the year 1909, a few men that distinctly remembered how they ran to the fire that night; how John Dick and his mother were taken from the blazing building; how John Dick was carefully laid in a bed of poison ivy; and how John Dick smiled and said: "It might have been worse."

John Dick never married; Alice Randall did. She married a man of very uneven and sudden temper; it was said they quarreled a good deal; in 1901 her husband died and left considerable life insurance. These are unimportant details, perhaps.

The optimism of John Dick never deserted him. Working by the day, supporting his mother, and hampered by a rheumatic affliction, he never was able to accumulate enough to become a farm-owner again. But nobody ever heard a word of complaint from him. "Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you," he was wont to say. Or sometimes it was, simply: "Don't borrow trouble. Things always come

right in the end." When his rheumatiz, aggravated by advancing years, knotted his hands and forced him to a cane, he smiled and said, "There's a sunny side to everything."

When he was no longer fit to do heavy field labor, he did odd jobs. A good many men with less optimism had more money; but that did not worry John Dick. He was the greatest amateur optimist in all the country round. People commented on it. Possibly he was a little vain of it. There was no harm in that.

In the Summer of 1909 John Dick suddenly sprang into fame in a most peculiar and adventitious manner. Abruptly he ceased to be a local amateur optimist, and became a professional optimist of wide reputation. There was not, for a year or two afterward, a town or village in the United States so remote and unvisited that it did not know the portrait of John Dick. John Dick was quoted as Shakespeare was quoted; and by more persons, and with more familiarity and assurance. It happened in this manner:

In July, during the usual "hot spell," a man was sitting on the veranda of the Eagle Inn at Walbridge, talking with Lafe Weatherbee, the aged proprietor. As they were talking, John

Dick passed by. It may have been the serene face of John Dick, or it may have been mere curiosity that led the stranger to ask who the passer-by was.

"That's John Dick," replied the hotel proprietor. "He's quite a character. Why, I remember forty-odd years ago . . ."

And in a reminiscent vein Lafe Weatherbee told of the marvelous display of fortitude on the night the Dick place burned.

"A regular dyed-in-the-wool optimist!" exclaimed the stranger, after hearing the story. "Has he got any money?"

"Poor as Job's turkey," was the reply.

"Naturally," murmured the stranger. After a moment's silence he said, "See if you can get him up here. I'd like to have a talk with him."

So John Dick made the acquaintance of Herbert J. Thorpen, of Chicago. This Mr. Thorpen was an impressive heavyweight, with a pair of roving, keen eyes and full of the dynamic personality so cloyingly common west of Pittsburgh. He was gifted with a rich baritone voice that would be equally effective on the concert platform, or in selling real estate. He had a manner of slapping his hearer on the knee, on the

back, or in any other exposed point, the better to drive home his argument. He spoke, when of money, preferably in hundred thousand denominations. He frequently remarked, when in temporary want of other conversation, that there was no place on God's footstool like Chicago.

When he rose and slapped John Dick on the shoulder and said "I'm glad to have a chance to talk with you, Mr. Dick," that weather-beaten optimist went away with the feeling that, somehow, he had been in a Great Presence, and that he could never hope to meet another such man.

It was a month or more afterward that a telegram came for John Dick. The operator at the station patiently telephoned around for half an hour before John was located, weeding a backyard garden. It was the first telegram he had ever received. He read it, quite overcome with amazement:

JOHN DICK,
East Walbridge, Mass.
Will pay expenses Chicago and return, talk over big proposition. Wire at once, collect.

THORPEN.

"I don't understand it," said John Dick. "I'll have to ask Lafe Weatherbee."

"All I know about him is he paid his bill here all right; and I socked it to him a little, too, on account of that diamond ring of his," replied the hotel proprietor, in response to John Dick's palpitating inquiry. "He wouldn't be trying to bluff anybody like you. Send him a telegram, and if he sends the money, go ahead. Find out what it is. Maybe somebody's died and left you something."

Two days later a money order for $50 came to John Dick. Then the whole village turned out and furnished a going-away suit for his journey. The mystery of it caught everyone and held them. The last thing John Dick said, before he boarded the train, was: "Well, whatever happens, it's all for the best."

Four men gathered in a little office on State street in Chicago. One of them was Herbert Thorpen. Two more were, Allison A. Forbush and Maurice Perlman. The fourth man was John Dick.

John Dick had had the journey of his life. Twice he had caught the porter going through the sleeping car, reached out of the top berth to clutch him and ask him what State they were

traveling through then. Both times it was Indiana. Both times John Dick was grateful to learn.

Now there was important business on the carpet. Mr. Thorpen was just as impressive as ever; his voice just as resonant. Mr. Forbush was a man that spoke very little, and when he did speak, it was in a subdued voice. The truth was, he was, by birth and raising, a State-of-Maine man. Mr. Perlman was not so impressive as the others in appearance, but somehow he looked to John Dick as though he could find money more readily on demand. Mr. Thorpen abruptly opened the meeting, after genially asking John Dick how he enjoyed the trip.

"This is the gentleman I told you of," said the baritone, speaking to Messrs. Perlman and Forbush. "Mr. Dick, of East Walbridge, Mass. (He said Mass., not Massachusetts.) The greatest little optimist you ever saw. Tell us about the time your barn burned, will you, Mr. Dick?"

John Dick told the circumstances.

"You hear that?" said Mr. Thorpen admiringly, when John had concluded. "Great little optimist. Fine face for the cover of the magazine. We'll call him 'Uncle John Dick.' Syndicate his

sayings in the newspapers. Street car ads with his 'Sunnyside Sayings.' Oh, fellows, this thing is going—big. It makes me dizzy. Why, the country is just crazy for optimism. And we get there first, with both feet. Oh, la, la!"

Mr. Thorpen showed such lyric enthusiasm that at first John Dick was a little scared.

"As I see it," went on Herbert J. Thorpen, "this country is just busting to buy optimism. There've been a lot of croakers and fellers that have been going round exposing honest graft. It's got to the point where, on account of these magazine writers, the suckers are all staying and hiding their money in stockings. They're getting to be regular sour-bellies and pessimists. What we want is a revival of the good old cheer-up days. Am I right, gents?"

Messrs. Forbush and Perlman nodded; and John Dick thought it just and courteous to acquiesce, though he didn't catch the drift of it all.

"Now I saw Mr. Dick when I was in Mass., in July, and I knew right away that he was the one to feature. Good old John! Your fortune is made!"

"I'm sure I'm thankful to you," replied J. D.

"Now if we can cut out some of this stage business," said Mr. Perlman, looking at his watch, "we ought to get to work. What'll we do first, Thorpen? Don't be afraid to talk, Forbush. What's the program?"

"First thing," replied Mr. Thorpen, "we've got to incorporate. We'd better do that in South Dakota."

"Or Maine," suggested Mr. Forbush. "You can incorporate a dead rabbit in Maine for one million dollars; thirty cents paid in."

"Here's to Maine, God bless her!" said Mr. Thorpen.

"Then we can begin to sell stock in the 'Sunnyside Boosters,'" said Mr. Forbush.

"I can hardly wait to unload my holdings," snickered Mr. Perlman.

"I suppose school-teachers and ministers will buy heavy," suggested Mr. Forbush.

"Understand," replied Mr. Thorpen, "we're going after bigger game than school-teachers and ministers. Leave them to the mining-stock people. We're going to get the business men; the hard-headed, enterprising business men of the country. They need optimism more than anybody else. That's where my little idea for il-

luminated signs comes in. Lemme read a few of them to you again:

DON'T KNOCK; BOOST

IT'S THE MAN THAT DOES A LITTLE MORE THAN HE'S PAID FOR THAT GET'S A LITTLE MORE THAN HE'S WORTH

WHEN YOU FEEL BLUE TAKE THE PINK PILL OF HOPE

DON'T WATCH THE CLOCK; IT MAKES IT NERVOUS

PULL FOR THE FIRM AND THE FIRM WILL PULL FOR YOU

And so forth," said Mr. Thorpen. "We ought to sell a million dollars' worth of signs the first year."

"They don't all sound exactly optimistic," objected Mr. Forbush.

"They don't have to," replied the baritone. "All they need is a pleasing setting and plenty of colored border."

"We've got to have several kinds of optimism," said Mr. Perlman. "What's optimism

for an employer is pessimism for an employee, and vice versa."

"Right you are," was Mr. Thorpen's comment. "We'll have fifty-seven varieties of optimism. Something for the young and old, the white and black, the poor and rich, the employer and employee. Then there are the celluloid buttons:

WATCH ME GROW
I'M A BOOSTER
SMILE, PLEASE
SAY A KIND WORD
CHEER UP, BROTHER

And so forth. Each little button will have on it the picture of John Dick, Emperor of Optimists, and his signature in fac-sim. From that we can work into selling John Dick cut-plug tobacco, John Dick playing cards, and John Dick safety razors. Oh, fellows, we're rich beyond the dreams of average."

"Avarice," suggested Mr. Forbush.

"Let the dream stuff pass," said Mr. Perlman. "Real money is our ambition. How much do we pay our friend Mr. Dick for the use of his name and face, and the prestige we are going to get for him."

"How much would you want?" asked Mr. Thorpen. "Don't be afraid to name your figure, Uncle John. If it's too tall, we'll slice it."

John Dick began to sense the fact that there was a colossal affair in progress in his presence. He got the idea that somehow, he did not know exactly why, he was of value to these men. So he aimed high; feeling that, at a pinch, he could come down. "Twenty-five dollars a week," he said boldly.

"Done!" said Mr. Thorpen. "I've got an appointment for you with the photographer at half-past three. Perlman, hunt that good corporation lawyer you spoke of, and start it going. Meanwhile, the magazine must be laid out. What did we decide to call it?"

"I'm for the 'Optimian'?" said Forbush.

"You're too highbrow, Forbush," said Thorpen. "'Optimian' is all right for Colby College, but the people at large would think it was the name of a Roman Emperor. Didn't we decide on 'The Booster'?"

"How about John Dick's Magazine?" said Perlman. "That suggests a personality."

"I—I couldn't run a magazine," faltered John Dick.

"Bless your soul, Uncle, you don't have to. You just have to stand for what we say in it. That will take all your strength."

The American League of Boosters (A. L. B.) was an enormous success from the very start. Thorpen, Perlman and Forbush demonstrated that they were no visionaries. They had felt a great need, and they were supplying it.

Thorpen, in his way, was unquestionably possessed of something like superhuman intuition. It was Thorpen who suggested that the American League of Boosters must have a yell. "You can make a man an optimist," he said, "but he won't stay that way unless he has a yell." So Thorpen produced this:

Help your brother on his way,
Do a kind deed every day.
I'm a booster, for you see
I belong to the A. L. B.
Boost! Boost! Boost! Tigerrr!

"That's regular damn nonsense!" remarked Forbush, when he heard it. "But I'll bet it goes with the optimists."

"Go?" echoed Thorpen. "In a month you'll

hear it yelled in every water-tank town in the country."

And it was so. And, naturally, having induced people to yell for the A. L. B., it was the easiest thing in the world to form local groups of Boosters. To this very day there is a dispute between Altoona, Penn., and Champaign, Ill., as to which place deserves the credit of starting the first lodge. Naturally the local lodges paid a reasonable percentage of their dues into the main lodge, which was in Chicago.

The next great move was the establishment of the Booster's Service Bureau for Manufacturers and Employers. This service guaranteed to keep employees happy on small salaries. Perlman was the manager of this section.

Next came the establishment of the Booster's Help for Workers. This service guaranteed to create a desire on the part of employers to pay larger wages. Forbush took hold of the Workers' end, and showed great skill in its management.

Then the "Uncle John Dick Magazine" was launched, to the tune of half-page and whole-page advertisements in all newspapers of consequence. Uncle John Dick was ostensibly the edi-

tor; but the real editor was a young man named Leach, who was said to be the author of more cheer-up poetry than any other versifier in the country. Its success was instantaneous.

For two subscriptions to the "Uncle John Dick Magazine" you got a bronze medal, bearing the face of Uncle John Dick in bas-relief. For two hundred yearly subscriptions (all new) you got a certificate good for four automobile tires whenever you bought the automobile that went with the tires.

Uncle John Dick coupons were placed in every package of certain proprietary medicines, breakfast foods and candy.

There was an Uncle John Dick lecture course. For a comparatively small amount of money anyone of average intelligence could learn to lecture and spread the gospel of Cheerful Thoughts.

If there was any field of money-getting endeavor that went untilled by the managers of the A. L. B. it is not now recalled. It all resulted in a "wave of optimism" (as it was joyously hailed) that swept from ocean to ocean and from lakes to gulf. One year after John Dick came to Chicago, his name was as well known as Castoria's. And children cried for him.

Naturally, there were imitators. There always are. They flatter the original and help advertise it. There was positively none genuine but the old reliable Uncle John Dick, and the three old reliables behind the scenes: viz., Thorpen, Perlman and Forbush.

Uncle John Dick sat in his office, in the Dollar Building on State street, day after day. He read the newspapers, smoked his pipe, and sometimes wrote letters home. He had a large gold watch that told the second, minute, hour, day, and showed the phases of the moon. He had several different pairs of shoes, and several entirely separate suits of clothes. And he had money saved up.

Sometimes, as he sat at his office window and looked out at the roofs around, he would murmur: "Everything always comes right in the end."

Uncle John Dick was happy—happy—except for one thing. Whenever the managers of the American League of Boosters met, it required all his care and solicitation to keep them from fighting. As time went on, Thorpen became more quarrelsome, Forbush became more cynical, and Perlman more sneering. Uncle John Dick

could not understand this. He felt sure that his associates were optimists, like himself; but they had such queer methods of showing it!

For instance, how could John Dick account for a remark that Perlman made: "The more I see of life, the more I appreciate a vacuum."

And Forbush had replied, "And the more I deal with these suckers, the better I think of yellow dogs."

Once, Thorpen, in a strange mood, had remarked, "The only trouble with Optimism is the rotten Optimists that go with it."

On the second anniversary of the founding of the American League of Boosters, there was a great parade in Chicago, to which nearly every local branch sent a delegate, and to which many sent a group. The biggest hall in the city could not accommodate the fourth of them, and they had to convene in parts. There were bands unnumbered, and banners that streamed optimism to the winds. It was practically a holiday in Chicago.

When the originators of the Booster were making preparations for the reception of the delegates, Thorpen cried out, with sudden ve-

hemence, "I suppose I've got to do the talking to this army of galoots!"

"You've got the voice, and the presence," said the others.

"I'll talk to them. I'll hand out the guff," cried Thorpen. "But I'm through with it, after another year. Every time I think of that crowd I feel sick; and the word 'Booster' gives me the shudders. I want to sell my interest and retire. I've got money enough, and I want to go away somewhere where I won't see a human soul, and snarl myself to death!"

" 'Pon my word," said Forbush, "if that parade goes by this building, "I'll throw a typewriter out the window on them!"

"Don't be crazy," warned Perlman. "The game's only good for another year, at most. You know this thing can't last. Next year the people will be shouting for war with Switzerland, or lynching Norwegians. I've got the great closing-out scheme. I want to get back to first principles. I want to sell stock in something."

"In what?" asked the others.

"I don't care what," replied Perlman. "So long as it's valueless."

"Copper mines?" asked Forbush, tentatively.

"Back to first principles," replied Perlman, nodding. "That's my motto. There's one place that people always love to put their money, and that's a hole in the ground. There's something romantic about digging for metal, or owning part of a diggery."

"Where'd be a good place to have the mine?" asked Thorpen.

"It doesn't matter much," was the reply, "so long as it's in a rocky country. One hole is about as good as another. The main thing is to get the stock certificates properly engraved. Something handsome, that can be framed along with Willie's High School diploma—that's the idea."

John Dick was not present at this conversation, or at any similar ones. He had recently shown a disposition mildly to question the methods of the triumvirate. "Uncle John Dick is a good old scout," said Perlman, "but he takes this Optimist business seriously. I wouldn't trust him. Way down in his heart he thinks that Optimism, like Salvation, ought to be free. He doesn't see Optimism as a commodity, at all. We'd better let him plod along as our copyrighted title."

"What'll we call the mine?" asked Thorpen.

"I suppose it ought to be the 'Uncle John Dick Copper Company,'" said Perlman. "The name is a big asset now." And it was so ordered.

"We've made half a million apiece out of Optimism already," said Thorpen. "Don't you suppose Uncle John Dick ought to get a raise? We can't be stingy with the old man."

"Sure. Make it thirty a week from now on," said Forbush. So John Dick's salary was increased.

It took but a short time to float the new branch of the A. L. B. The Uncle John Dick Magazine, which now had a circulation of 250,000, became a powerful instrument in purveying opportunities to become rich. Every man that prided himself on looking on the bright side of things, that hoped for the best, that said a kindly word every day, that wanted to be watched while he grew—bought at least a hundred shares of stock. Money began to flow in. A new crew of clerks was hired to take care of the tremendous rush of business. The investors sent money-orders, registered letters, and cash wrapped in tissue paper. Some of them sent their private checks; but these latter were all collected before the stock was sent, because

of the well-known fact that, even among optimists, there are some few who might send a bogus check.

Starting at ten cents a share, the demand for Uncle John Dick Copper was such that the price jumped to fifteen, to twenty, finally to thirty-five cents.

About the eighth month after the stock selling began, Forbush came to the office one afternoon. He seemed, according to the office boy that had charge of his room, a little nervous. When he left the office he carried a suitcase with him.

Later, Mr. Perlman came in hurriedly, gave a few crisp orders to his stenographer, and left, carrying a black handbag.

Just as the office force was leaving, Mr. Herbert J. Thorpen swept into the office. A detained clerk saw him emerge from his private room with an envelope in one hand and a large and seemingly heavy package in the other. The envelope was dropped by Mr. Thorpen into Uncle John Dick's letter-box.

When Uncle John Dick came down to the office the following morning he found, among

the other mail, the letter of Mr. Thorpen. It was brief:

UNCLE JOHN:

Sorry I couldn't see you to tell you about it. Don't ask any questions, but draw your money from wherever you've got it and buy a through ticket to England by way of Canada. The pessimists are too strong for us. Good luck.

T.

Uncle John, startled, wandered over to the door marked "Thorpen," and tried the handle. It was locked. So were the doors marked "Perlman" and "Forbush." Then he went to his desk, sat down, and read the note again.

At ten-thirty, Uncle John, having come to no definite conclusion in the matter, decided that, at any rate, it would be well to get his money. Obviously, something was wrong. He had never had much faith in savings-banks, so he had deposited his earnings in the big vaults of the "American League of Boosters."

John Dick was on his way to the cashier's cage when a big man loomed up in front of him, and an office boy said: "That's him."

"Mr. Dick?" said the big man.

"Yes, sir."

"I'd like a few words with you. Can we go in here?"

They went into John Dick's office, and sat down. "Where are your friends?" asked the stranger. "I'm a marshal."

"That's funny," said John Dick. "Glad to meet you. My grandmother, on my mother's side, was a Marshall. Perhaps we're related."

The big man looked at John Dick a minute. A stern look it was; and it made the old man wince. "You better not start fooling," said the man. "This is no joke. You're under arrest."

"But I always said," John Dick related, when he returned to East Walbridge, "that everything turns out right in the end. And it has, you see. They knew I didn't have any bad intentions. The judge was one of the nicest men you ever saw, and everybody was good to me."

"But you never got your money," said someone. "That was pretty mean!"

"Well, I did feel bad at first," replied John Dick. "But perhaps it's just as well, after all. I try to look on the sunny side of things."

And so John Dick went back to doing chores,

without complaint. Sometimes he used to say that he was much happier back in the little town, anyway. He had had to wear starched collars in Chicago, and change them twice a day. And it was noisy, and there wasn't a place in the whole city where you could get real buckwheat cakes, with genuine first-run maple sirup on them.

When the weather was terrifically hot, in the Summer, John Dick used to wipe his forehead with a red handkerchief and say, "Think of the poor devils that go exploring around the North Pole. They'd give anything for this weather."

And in the winter time, when the temperature dropped to 25 below zero, John Dick would say, "Anyway, I don't think I'd care to live in Brazil."

But little by little the old man "failed," as they say in East Walbridge. He was without near kin, and there seemed nothing to do but take him up to the town almshouse.

Like all good New Englanders, John Dick had a dread of this fate. When it was suggested to him, he broke down, for the first time that anybody ever knew. "I can't go there!" he cried. "I couldn't bear to go there!" And for days

afterward he was miserable. Yet he became reconciled at last. It was settled that he should go up to the Town Farm in October, as soon as the weather began to grow cold.

October came, and the 18th day of October came, and a carriage drove up to Deacon Philpott's house, where John Dick was staying, and Curt Adams jumped out and went into the yard. John Dick was sitting on the back porch, in the sun. "You all ready?"

"Yes, I'm all packed up," said John Dick. "I haven't got much."

There was a trunk, and an old-fashioned shut-over, and some odds and ends. "Well, good-by, Deacon," called John, as cheerily as possible. "Good-by, Mis' Philpott. It's a fine day for a ride."

They drove along the river road, up to Slater's wood-working mill, and past the blacksmith shop. On the outskirts of the village, as they were passing a little white house, with a neat garden in front, an old woman came out the front door and called to the occupants of the wagon.

"Well, if that isn't you, John Dick!" she said. "I heard you were going—up there."

It was Alice Robinson, born Randall, she

whom John Dick had once sparked. She came over to the wagon wheel, and there was a moment's silence. Then Curt Adams discreetly jumped out and said, "I've got to go over to the blacksmith shop a minute. Hold the reins, will you, John?"

"It's a shame," said Mrs. Robinson, looking up.

"It isn't so bad, Alice. It's all the way you look at it. Every dark cloud has a silver lining; and—"

"Do drop that nonsense for once, John!" exclaimed the widow. "That mealy-mouth has been the undoing of you. It makes me—ugh! I've no patience with it! Do you remember, John, the night I told you I wouldn't have you? I said I couldn't tell you why. Well, it was just on account of that optimism stuff you were always having over, and went to Chicago about. When they told me you just sot on the grass there that night, and said: 'It might have been worse,' and 'Praise the Lord,' and that kind of talk, I said to myself, says I: 'It ain't human. It ain't sense and justice.' I couldn't help thinking to myself, 'If it was me he had just lost, instead of a house and barns,' he'd probably say, 'It might have been worse,' or something like that—

why couldn't you up and cuss, John, and shake your fist, and dance around madder than a hornet, like real folks? Folks are made to be blue and sad when they have reason to be, and then they'll be happier when they have reason to be. Things don't come out right in the end always. They didn't with you. Some folks get the worst of it all the time, and some folks get the best of it all the time—I like a man that can cuss."

"You got one," said John Dick, with a sad smile.

"Yes; I did. Well, we didn't have just what you'd call an uninteresting time, anyway. Walter had a bad temper; but there was always something doing. Shhh!—here's Curt!—well, good-by, John. When I come up your way berrying, I'll look in."

The carriage moved on. The road wound along the course of a leaping brook, up, up, through dark woods where weeds grew rank on the roadside, past two broken-down and abandoned farmhouses, and finally emerged into a great clearing near the top of the hill. In a few minutes more they drove into the yard of the Town Farm. Several aged paupers were hovering in the shade of an elm-tree at the

front of the house; and they eyed John Dick hawkishly, as though he might have come to take the bread from their mouths.

John Dick alighted and looked around. They were on the highest point of land for miles in every direction. On all sides was the undulating horizon line of hills upon hills. The air was brisk and invigorating.

The optimist stepped out into the open and looked around for a full minute. Then he turned to Curt Adams and said:

"Well, anyway, the view from here is grand!"

PRISON-MADE

THE Latin Quarter has been called "the Greenwich Village of Paris." There is a considerable similarity between the two neighborhoods. In both is to be found a curious intermingling of petty shopkeeping and the arts. They are both incubators of genius—chuck full of eggs.

American tourists should see Greenwich Village first. In the quantity of artistic effort, it rises superior to its French rival. Here in this little corner of New York, stowed away between Sixth Avenue and the Hudson, is the center of the magazine industry of America. It has been estimated:

That the amount of 8½x11 typewriter paper consumed in Greenwich Village every year, if piled up, would mount to the astonishing height of seven and one-third miles.

That the total foot-pounds of energy expended in hitting typewriter keys in Greenwich Village in a year would be sufficient to light New York, Paris, Berlin and London with electricity.

That if one day's manuscripts were withheld from the Greenwich Village post office, half the entire postal employees of New York would be thrown into idleness.

It has been said, though without much foundation, that when good Americans die they go to Paris. It can be said, with far greater conviction, that when American manuscripts are rejected, they go back to Greenwich Village.

On Bank Street, in Greenwich Village, is a plain, red brick house, just like almost every other house on Bank Street except for the number on the door. This house was originally planned for three stories of lodging rooms and half a story of rat space at the top. It had occurred, however, to a thoughtful landlady, that the rat space at the top could be made into a habitation for poets. So it was thus arranged.

Now if you get the idea that this lodging house keeper was a flinty-hearted, shrewish, acidulous woman, you err. She was buxom, moderately blithe and generous as the sunshine. When she converted the rat space into poet space, she did it out of the goodness of her heart. She was not a rich woman; she could not afford to keep poets in her four-dollar rooms; she

could, by creating a one-dollar room, afford to keep one or two poets all the year round. And she kept so amiably and justly to her purpose that, at the beginning of the year 1914, she was able truthfully to say: "I have never taken a single penny from a poet." And she was able to say (just as the Cunard Line "has never lost a passenger"): "I have never lost a manuscript."

At the beginning of the year 1914 Mrs. Alston had only one poet in her rat space. His name was Elfred Bliss Keymore. Though but a young man, he had the largest collection of thumb-prints in Greenwich Village, each thumb-print being the mark of a manuscript reader.

The next room was occupied by Williston Haynes. Though not a poet, but a writer of special articles for the Sunday newspapers, Haynes was permitted to occupy the room next to Keymore on account of the temporary shortage of poets in the house. The two young men, Haynes and Keymore, had met at the door one night, had shared Haynes's frankfurters and rye bread, and were undying friends thereafter. They swapped reminiscences, and each discovered that the other was a college man, one from the East, the other from the West. So, with

that instinct that impels college men to band themselves together in common defense against the better educated, they swore mutual allegiance over a bottle of Mrs. Alston's beer.

One rainy winter afternoon Elfred Bliss Keymore sat in his tiny room writing a poem. That he was not in the mood for composition was plain from the number of erasures and interlineations he made and from his distrait manner. Suddenly he threw down his pen, cocked his feet up on the window sill and stared gloomily out at the rain-soaked area.

There was a heavy tramping upon the staircase; the door opened and Williston Haynes came in. "Hello!" he cried as he entered. "Working?"

"I can't make it go to-day," replied Keymore. "What's the news? Did you—"

The other's face clouded. He threw off his overcoat and sat down on the edge of the bed. "Rotten luck!" he said. "Old Rink won't stand for it."

"He won't stand for it?" repeated Keymore, with an almost tragic look of disappointment.

"No. Turned down the idea right away. I

waited around about an hour to see him. Finally he let me come in. I told him what I had in mind. I said to him: 'Mr. Rink, I know where there's a poet actually starving to death here in New York City.' He went right into his pocket and pulled out a quarter, and handed it to me. 'Give him this,' he says."

"The fool!" exclaimed Keymore bitterly.

"Well, I said to him: 'This isn't charity, Mr. Rink. This is a bully Sunday story for the *Star*. Poet—actually starving in a garret in Greenwich Village—right in the midst of New York's luxury—cabarets—taxicabs—all that sort of thing. I can give you a page for the Magazine Section, with pictures and details of how he has been maintaining life on four cents a day.'"

Haynes paused for breath. "And he wouldn't stand for it?" repeated Keymore.

"He gave me the laugh," replied Haynes sourly. "He says: 'Young man, that's the worst chestnut in the business, except maybe "Children of European Rulers." Why, the starving poet stunt has been done to a frazzle. Now if your friend could learn a few new dance steps, and get the daughter of some Riverside Drive mil-

lionaire to tango with him on the stone bench in Herald Square, there might be a good news story in that—' "

"What a jackass!" moaned Keymore.

"Well, that settled it, anyway," continued Haynes. "I suppose old man Rink knows what he's talking about. He's the biggest Sunday editor in New York. We'll have to think of some other stunt to make your poetry sell."

Elfred Bliss Keymore looked out of the window and sighed. All at once a gleam of hope came into his eyes. He turned to his friend Haynes and asked: "Did you give him back the quarter?"

"By Jove, I didn't!" exclaimed Haynes, feeling in his trouser pocket.

Keymore became radiant. "Great!" he said, holding out his hand.

"I'll tell you what, Keymore," said Haynes after a silence; "your only chance is to go to prison."

"Explain the joke," replied the poet. "My wits are dull to-day."

"No joke about it," the special writer continued. "It's a scheme I had in mind all along,

but I didn't want to suggest it except as a last resort. It strikes me now as the best thing to do. There's a great market these days for poetry written in prison, by regular bona-fide prison poets. You see the old idea, that poetry had to be written by a lot of refined men that live with their own families in Cambridge, Mass., and obey the laws and bring up children—that's all gone by. . . . You never tended bar, did you, Elfred?"

The poet shook his head.

"I don't suppose you ever stowed away on board a tramp steamer?"

Another negative.

"Or hoboed it through the Middle West, working your way by reciting your verses?"

"You know blamed well I haven't," replied the poet impatiently.

"Then you've got to go to prison," said Haynes decidedly. "What people want nowadays is poetry written by people you wouldn't expect to be writing poetry—roughnecks, longshoremen, jailbirds and defectives. Don't you see that gives the poetry, especially when it is good, an extra touch of interest?"

"I get you," said the poet. "I'll run out and

heave a brick through the delicatessen window on the corner, and get sent up."

"Nothing of the kind!" warned Haynes. "You'd get ten days on Blackwell's Island, and have to associate with the ignorant class of criminals. There's nothing romantic about that bunch down there. They don't write poetry; they sing it. What you've got to do is get into prison, among the select criminals—the Jimmy Valentine bunch."

"But how the devil can I get into prison?" asked the poet hopelessly. "I'm no Tammany politician. And I don't want to commit any real crime. That sort of thing implies work, and I'm hanged if I'm going to work."

"I'm the last one that would suggest such a thing to you, old man."

The poet took long thought. Then he said: "Does a chap get treated pretty rough up there?"

"Not while the reformers are on the job," replied Haynes. "Why, there was an unruly guard discharged just the other day for defending himself against a prisoner. The rule up there now is lyric suasion. You get good food and plenty of it, and the very best grand opera singers come up to entertain you."

"By Jove, it looks good, the way you tell about it," said Elfred. "Do you think I could sell my poetry from there?"

"Unless the market goes all to smash, which isn't likely, you can dispose of a raft of it. Besides that, you can get into the columns of the *Star of Bethlehem,* the prison newspaper. They don't pay for poetry, but it would come in handy, when your first volume is issued, to say: 'Reprinted, by permission of the *Star of Bethlehem.*'"

"Well, I'm game," finally assented the poet. "How am I going to get into the prison?"

"Break in," was the cheerful answer.

"Break in!" exclaimed the poet incredulously.

"Certainly. You've heard of prisoners breaking out, haven't you? How do you suppose they break out?"

"They climb over the walls, don't they? I'm not up on that sort of thing, Williston."

"They do *not* climb over the wall, Elfred. You are indeed not up on that sort of thing. They go out through the gate, having first made themselves economically invisible to the guard on duty."

"But if it's as easy as that to get out, I don't

see why they don't all walk out," persisted Keymore.

"You forget," replied Haynes, in a tone of finality, "that they are having a good time there, and they are selling their poetry as fast as they can write it. To break out of prison, in these days, is a confession that one's verses are not selling well."

"I see," said the poet.

It was about half past four in the afternoon, and nearly dark, when Elfred Bliss Keymore, the unpublished poet, approached the big stone and iron gate of the prison. The gate was closed; there was nobody about. Keymore looked around for a push button, but no such modern appliance was in sight. He tried the handle of the iron gate, and the enormous barrier swung easily inward. When the gate had clanked shut behind him, he found himself in a great court, flanked by forbidding and massive walls, thickly dotted with barred windows. There was a sign, with a pointing finger, "To Warden's Office," and he followed that.

Keymore found the door of the office without trouble, and knocked gently. A voice called,

"Come in!" The poet entered and found himself in the presence of a corpulent, good-natured man, of middle age and slightly grayed hair and mustache. The man was sitting at his desk, leaning back in a swivel chair. He held in his hand a book bound in stuffed leather, with the gilt name "Tennyson" plainly visible on the front. "Well, what do you want?" he asked.

"A cell, if you please," replied Keymore, with fast-beating heart. The whole environment was so little pleasurable to the eye that he felt like bolting.

"How did you get in here?" was the next question, put sternly.

"Walked in," replied the poet.

"Through the big gate?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'll have that guard broke," exclaimed the warden angrily. "What's to prevent the whole world from swooping in here? Why, every spavined poet in the State would be hammering at my door if they knew that big gate was unlocked."

Keymore was taken aback. In the warden's words was the intimation that the institution did not desire any more poets. This was indeed

a facer. But the poet kept his presence of mind, and when the question came, "What are you doing here?" he replied: "I'm a burglar. I demand to be imprisoned!"

"A burglar!" snorted the warden. "You're a fine-looking burglar! What's that bulging out in the inside pocket of your coat? Ain't those manuscripts of poems?"

Keymore blushed at being identified so easily. He admitted his occupation.

"And didn't you bust in here to join our Prison Poets Colony? Come, now, tell the truth!"

"Yes, I did," replied Keymore.

The warden's tone became gentler. "Well, lucky for you that you're not a newspaper reporter," he said. "I'd have had you thrown out neck and crop. There was a cheap newspaper man broke into this prison the other day, and how do you think he described me in his write-up? He called me 'the beetle-browed Cerberus'—the low-down cuss! And when I looked up Cerberus I found it was a three-headed dog. If I could catch him I'd wring his neck!"

"Have you got many—er—poets here?" asked Keymore, to change the subject.

"Have we?" was the reply, accompanied by

an eye-glint of pride. "We've got more poets here—more that sell their stuff—than there are in Indianapolis. In fact, we're full up on poets. That's why I'm going to ask you to go right out the way you came in, and not to forget to close the gate tight after you."

"If I were in your place and you were in mine," said the poet, in a voice that nearly broke with disappointment, "I bet I'd give you a chance. I've never had a real square deal yet. As my friend Mr. Haynes was saying yesterday, I've never been a hobo, nor a train robber, nor a pick-pocket, nor anything that would give me the inside track on poetry. I was brought up so respectably that it left its curse on me. And now I can't even break into prison."

The warden's glance softened, and just the suspicion of a tear glistened in his eye. "I'll give you a show," he said, "even if it costs me my job. I can't put you in a cell, because the cells are all reserved for lawbreakers. But I've got an extra room in my quarters, and I'll let you stay there—on one condition."

"I accept the condition without knowing what it is," shouted Keymore joyfully.

"It is a condition that will bring you no dis-

honor," said the warden, "and may give you some pleasure. I shan't tell you what it is just now, but I am going to hold you to it some time in the future. Do you promise?"

"I do," said the poet briskly.

"All right. I'll have you shown to your room, and fit you out in a new suit of the regulation stripes. To-morrow I'll introduce you to No. 93, the dean of the Prison Poets, who will show you the ropes. No. 93 is the author of the poem 'Motherhood,' in the current number of the *Parnassian.* Possibly you read it? I did. I couldn't understand it, but you can't understand much of anything that 93 writes. He's too big for us. Now, 886 has a different style; plain as the nose on your face, and yet very artistic. And 621 specializes on children's verse. The rest of them are doing well. There's only one of them I'd warn you against. Not that he isn't a good fellow, but he's got a streak of cheapness in him. He makes more money than any of the rest of them, too. I mean 554, on the north side of the prison. He writes poetry they use to advertise Van Blank's canned spaghetti. The rest of the poets sort of hold him off at arm's length. They don't like what they call his treason to the art."

inally been sentenced for swindling, and who had some mysterious political influence that enabled him to stay in prison after his term had expired, showed a fancy toward the unpublished newcomer, and gave him valuable assistance. Among other things, he gave Keymore the true note of prison poetry. He showed him how it must not touch the minor chords too often; how it must avoid much complaining, bewailing of his lot; how it should rather be big, burly, heaven-calling, with even a suspicion of defiance of the power of man. Such poetry as would be calculated to impress the average magazine reader sufficiently to make him say: "By George, *that* man ought never to be doing time!"

Keymore profited so much by the kindly advice of his guide that at the end of the third week he received a check, with the following letter:

DEAR SIR:

We are glad to be able to tell you that we are keeping your touching verses, "The Sparrow on the Wall," for publication in the *Peculiar Magazine*. It is the consensus of opinion that this is one of the finest poems that has been turned out of your present abode. You may be interested to know that the stenographer to the president of the corporation broke down and

the Prison Poets was that of being pardoned out. Thousands of well-meaning readers, all over the world, were constantly circulating petitions and addressing them to the President, the Governor of the State and other notables, to the end of breaking the chains of a Prison Poet. Much against their wills, several poets had already been pardoned; whereupon the public soon lost interest in their work.

Keymore's heart often sank as he heard the conversation of the Prison Poets. They had been everywhere, seen everything. There was scarcely one that had not been around the world; some had fought in the Foreign Legion, some had occupied cells in Siberian prisons, others were perfect in the argot of tramps.

Keymore had his share of self-assurance, but he also had insight enough to see that he was outclassed. He regretted the nights he had slept in unadventurous beds instead of under haystacks or on the snow; but he knew, too, that regrets were unavailing. The thing to do was to study the method of the successful. In this determination he was assisted by the complaisance of 93, the dean of the incarcerated poets. This prisoner, a middle-aged man who had orig-

inally been sentenced for swindling, and who had some mysterious political influence that enabled him to stay in prison after his term had expired, showed a fancy toward the unpublished newcomer, and gave him valuable assistance. Among other things, he gave Keymore the true note of prison poetry. He showed him how it must not touch the minor chords too often; how it must avoid much complaining, bewailing of his lot; how it should rather be big, burly, heaven-calling, with even a suspicion of defiance of the power of man. Such poetry as would be calculated to impress the average magazine reader sufficiently to make him say: "By George, *that* man ought never to be doing time!"

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wept while copying the verses. Let us see some more of your work as soon as possible.

Yours very truly,
THE EDITORS.

P.S. You might send us a short sketch of your life and a photograph. It would be well to have this photo taken in your present clothing, if you have no objection. If you cannot do this, then a photo taken under some thrilling circumstances—in Central Africa, the Philippines, shooting rapids or the like.

Keymore, delighted, showed the letter to 93, his mentor. The pleasure of 93 was unaffected and warm. He grasped Keymore's hand and shook it. "You're on the right track now, youngster," he cried. "You've your future in your own hands. Remember never to be too—er—*weepy*. Be strong, and captain-of-my soul-like. That gets them—to use the vernacular."

"I owe it all to you," cried Keymore, in a rush of gratitude.

"Never mind that a bit," was the generous reply. "All I ask is that you help some other young fellow when the time comes. Why, there was a time when my verses were rejected by the *Springfield Republican*."

"It doesn't seem possible!" murmured Keymore.

The next two weeks were the happiest that Keymore had ever known. He felt, for the first time, the thrill that goes with writing something that stands an even chance of getting accepted. It was a period of great prosperity in the prison. The magazines were buying heavily. One of the cooks caught the spirit of success, scribbled off some verses, and sold them to the *Baker's and Confectioner's Guide.* Nobody had the slightest fear of a reaction from this prosperity. But there was a reaction, and it came about in an unexpected manner.

One afternoon, about the same hour that Elfred Bliss Keymore had broken into the prison, another man broke in. It was noised about that he had some sort of hold on the warden, for though he was not a poet, he was permitted to remain. In appearance he was not prepossessing. He was about twenty-eight years old. His face was pitted deeply, and he had red hair and reddish eyelashes. He spoke very little at first, but when he spoke at all it was in a commanding tone, as though, young as he was, he had been accustomed to be obeyed.

For some reason this newcomer, whose name was Bopp, singled out Keymore as the principal poet of the group. Perhaps this was because Elfred's success was the most recent, and showed most plainly in his manner.

It was plain that Bopp was in the prison as a matter of business. He watched the poets furtively, even eavesdropped when they were speaking together. Finally, one day, he approached Keymore and asked for a few minutes' conversation.

"Do you believe in unions?" he asked abruptly.

"What kind of unions?" was the innocent answer.

"Trade."

"Yes," was the unhesitating reply.

Bopp drew a long breath. He had evidently not been expecting this answer. There was a pause, and then he said: "Then why don't you fellers organize?"

"What fellows?"

"You poets."

Keymore was astounded. "Why," he replied, "we're not in trade."

"You get money, don't you?"

"Yes."

"You get it for doing something, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, ain't that trade?"

"Indeed it is not," replied Keymore proudly. "It is art."

"Art be hanged!" said Bopp. "You fellers have had this open shop graft long enough. I don't mind telling you I'm a walking delegate for the new-formed Poets' Union, and I've come up here to form a chapel among you fellers. The less kicking the better. You tell your friends that."

"But you are not a poet?" asked Keymore.

"I should say not," was the reply. "'Let me do the walking and I don't care who writes the country's poetry.' That's my motto."

"But I tell you right now," said Keymore, "you won't do any business here. Not being a poet yourself, you don't see things as we do."

"I've got grand good eyesight," returned Bopp, "and I can see a whole lot. Now you tell the fellers what I told you, and have a committee to confer with me. That's all."

Insolent as Bopp's manner was, Elfred could not fail to be impressed by its authoritativeness. He lost no time in communicating the message

to 93. To his surprise, 93 did not wax indignant, or seem to be outraged. He asked simply: "Does this man Bopp seem to be pretty sure of his power?"

Keymore replied in the affirmative.

"Well, it may be," went on 93, "that something could be arranged along that line. We'll call a meeting and take a vote on it."

Not a word about the immaculateness of art; not a sign of uprising against the ethics of poetry! Keymore was amazed. But he had faith in 93, and was willing to follow him blindly.

Several other poets with whom Keymore spoke that day took the same urbane view of the situation. They were willing to be convinced of the advisability of unionizing. A meeting was called, with the permission of the warden, for the following day.

This meeting was an affair calculated to impress the outside world, if the outside world could have been present. Seated in the dining hall was the cream of the country's incarcerated talent, representing all verse forms and aspirations from epic to rondel. Keymore's heart throbbed with the pleasure of being one of them.

No. 93 introduced the subject for discussion

with graceful clearness, and asked for opinion from the floor. Immediately there were replies. There was no great desire manifested for the scheme; on the other hand, the general opinion was that if unionization were necessary to insure a continuation of prosperity, it should be done as soon as possible. The chairman, 93, nodded approbation.

Suddenly 554, the poet of canned spaghetti, jumped to his feet. He was flushed and angry, and spoke with impetuous eloquence. "Are you going to forsake the principles of art for the sake of a few miserable dollars?" he cried. "Did Homer belong to a union, or Shakespeare, or Dante? Did Keats pay dues? Would Tennyson have come at the beck and call of a walking delegate? Shame on you! If you surrender at this first assault of commercialism, you are not fit to be in prison."

There was more and even bitterer speech from 554. The rest of the poets sat silent under the scathing denunciation; but the words of the speaker found a mark, for when the vote was taken it was unanimous in rejection of the union idea.

"But what do you think they will do to us?"

asked a number of poets of 554, who had now assumed leadership.

"What *can* they do?" he sneered. "We've got our public."

But the true answer to the question "What will they do to us?" came only too soon. On the third day following the meeting, 93 received a bulky envelope in the morning mail. At first he thought it was mail from his clipping bureau; he could not imagine, at this stage in his career, the rejection of a manuscript. Yet that was what the envelope contained—rejected poems. And with them came the following letter:

DEAR SIR:

We are returning your recent offering with great regret. If we responded to our desires, we should be only too happy to accept these poems; but we are obliged to say that, owing to outside pressure upon us, this will be impossible—*not only now, but in the future.* We may as well tell you that a complaint has been made against our acceptance of prison-made articles of any kind, as being in unfair competition with the union-made goods. We do not undertake to decide the merits of this question. Business reasons constrain us to accept conditions as they are.

With great regret and kindest wishes,

Yours very truly,

THE EDITORS.

In the next two days the prison mail was glutted with rejected poems, coming from practically all the important magazines in the country.

The prison was in an uproar. Dreamy and philosophical and unworldly as poets are, they have one sentiment in common with everybody else in the world: they hate to lose a good thing. A committee was appointed to wait upon the warden and have him arbitrate the dispute with the powerful union forces outside.

"Gentlemen," said the warden, with great feeling, "I'm sorry to have to tell you that the game is up. That fellow Bopp didn't come here to unionize the prison poets. They wouldn't let you join the union if you wanted to. He was here merely to find out what he could about your business. There's a great wave of feeling against prison-made goods just now. We can't sell any of our brooms and brushes except at a price below the cost of manufacture. So you see how it stands. Speaking for myself, I'm mighty sorry about this. I'm never so happy as when I am surrounded by poets. And now, I suppose, the prison is going to be filled up with lowbrows that never amounted to anything and never will!"

As the poets were leaving the warden's office,

the warden reached out a detaining hand to Keymore.

"Pretty tough, eh?" he said.

Keymore nodded. "Just my luck. I no sooner break into prison than the whole business goes up in smoke."

"I'd like to have you hang around here a few days," said the warden.

"What's the use?"

"Why, it wouldn't be any use to you. But perhaps you recall that I let you come here on one condition, and you promised to fulfill that condition."

"Right you are," replied Keymore. "I'll do it. What is it?"

The warden reached up to the shelf above his head and took down a large portfolio. It was brimful of large sheets of paper, probably not less than a ream.

"I've been writing a little poetry myself, in the last two or three years," said the warden. "I want you to criticize my work. One of these is the longest poem ever written in this prison, if I do say it myself. It's twelve cantos and—*hanged if the boy ain't fainted away!*"

WILDCATS

THERE was a time—and not so many years ago—when these united states abounded with a type of business man commonly and flatteringly known as "hard-headed." It is believed that this type is passing out, or at least undergoing some change. Possibly, in the judging of heads, too much credit was formerly given to the mere osseous tendency. . . .

It was to the hard-headed business man that the pre-election orator appealed, to save the country from the opposition and consequent bow-wows. It was to the hard-headed business man that the newspapers always referred with pride. If you wanted to start a movement, or organize a committee, the first thing you had to do was to find a hard-headed business man.

A large quantity of moonbeam mining stock and other nebulous investment paper that has gone around the United States in the last twenty years is in the top bureau drawers of the hard-headed business men. They have long given up the idea of realizing on it. Every once in a

while they take out that little bundle of certificates, look them over and scratch their hard business heads. They are the men that considered first mortgages on real estate a little bit risky.

This will serve to introduce to you four of the hardest-headed business men in the country —all residents of the town of Starrton: Washington Peckham, the shoe man, known to his intimates as "Wash"; J. Q. A. Flickens, the popular grocer, commonly called "Quincy"; Horace Wellspeak, drygoods and notions, just across from the Odd Fellows' Block; and Dillingham Perkins ("Dill," they call him), the hardware man.

I am taking you into the best company of Starrton when I introduce you to these men. They are the solid men of the community. They own one automobile each; they go to church regularly, except Mr. Flickens, who is a Christian Scientist, and combats malicious thought currents at home; and nothing important has been mentioned to their discredit in all the years of their business life.

Reader, meet these gentlemen! Gentlemen, meet the reader! What will you have?

It was Saturday afternoon in Starrton. Of course it was Saturday afternoon in other places, too; but the point is that the Merchants' Club had just voted to have a half-holiday every week, and this was the first under the new rule. Consequently there were a number of persons in Starrton that did not know what to do with themselves, and among these were four employers of labor; to wit, the gentlemen to whom you have just been introduced.

"Wash" Peckham, after dinner, came downtown and strolled into the Commercial Hotel. It happened that Messrs. Flickens and Perkins had also entered the hotel, and were sitting at the front windows with their feet on the iron rail stretched across the windows for that purpose. Soon afterward Horace Wellspeak, sauntering around restlessly, came into the hotel for a cigar. So the four hard-headed business men met in a conclave of leisure, and had conversation in low and confidential tones.

They mentioned the good old days of the Dingley tariff, and how the agitators are killing business. They spoke of collections, and compared experiences with the town deadbeats. Somebody spoke of Socialism, and Mr. Flickens disposed of

that political error in perpetuity by saying that if property should be all divided up, as he understood was the basic idea of the thing, it wouldn't be long before the able men would have it all back again, together with garnishees on the other folks' wages. The drama came under discussion for an instant, when "Wash" Peckham remarked that, after all, they have no such shows in these days as "Human Hearts." There was more of this. . . .

And then Horace Wellspeak, apropos of nothing in particular, said:

"Do you know anything about Kamchatka Copper?"

"I've heard of a mining stock by that name," replied "Dill" Perkins. "You bought some of it, Horace?"

"No," replied the dealer in drygoods.

"Speaking of stocks," said Mr. Perkins, with a tone of disinterestedness, "has anybody heard of a 'Collapsible Canoe' proposition? A lot of people are going around saying it's a pretty good thing."

"I never heard of it," said "Wash" Peckham, amid a general headshaking negation. "You got some, Dill?"

"Oh, no," replied Mr. Peckham. "I just thought you might have heard of it."

Mr. Flickens had been exceedingly interested in the questions and answers. He looked around at his companions for a moment, as though in doubt whether to speak. Finally he cleared his throat and said: "I don't suppose anybody here has heard anything about Vulture?"

"Vulture what?" asked the shoe dealer.

"It's a radium mine," replied the grocer. Then he added, protectively: "I think."

"How many shares you got of it?" was the laconic question.

Mr. Flickens laughed a low, superior sort of laugh. "I guess not," he replied. "My money comes too hard."

Dill Perkins sat long in thought. "I was just wondering," he said, "about some stock I've got at home. My brother-in-law in Kansas gave it to me last Christmas as a present. I swan if I didn't lay it by somewhere and forget all about it until this minute! If I remember it rightly, it's called by the name of Cobalt Dingbat, and the mines are in Canady."

The rest of the men looked at Dill Perkins with silent admiration. They admired his imaginative

power. He had had an inspiration. He had put a brother-in-law at work for him. They were ordinary liars. He was a liar with a flourish and a fillip.

There was a long silence, during which the four hard-headed business men looked out the window at the deserted and dusty square, and sent economical wavelets of smoke toward the panes of glass.

Suddenly Wash Peckham rose and walked back a little distance from the window, and looked around. The clerk was at the desk, half asleep. A porter was sitting at a cold radiator, sound asleep. The clock was noisy. Mr. Peckham's reconnoitering discovered no possible eavesdroppers. He came back to the group and asked:

"Did any of you ever hear of a man, or see one, by the name of Montagu De Blon?"

Three men shook their heads sagely.

"I'll describe him to you," continued Mr. Peckham. "He's quite tall, with black, curly hair, dresses fit to kill, has a little mustache with ends that stick out straight in a point, and he wears patent leather shoes and a long cutaway coat. And he is a very good talker. Know him?"

Three men again shook their heads, albeit they hitched a little in their chairs.

"He was here not so long ago," went on Mr. Peckham, "and I understand he sold a lot of stock here, of one thing or another."

"Now I do remember," said Mr. Wellspeak, "some such fellow called on me. But it was a busy day, and I told him I couldn't talk with him."

There was more silence. "His name is Montagu De Blon," went on Mr. Peckham, hammering on the nail in the good old New England fashion. "I should judge he was a foreigner."

"Well, what about him?" asked Mr. Flickens quietly.

"Well, nothing in particular," was the reply—"except that he registered here at the Commercial Hotel just before noon to-day."

Three men said "What!" almost simultaneously, and then, reddening considerably, subsided into their chairs and assumed indifference.

The clock ticked. The hotel porter snored industriously. Mr. Wellspeak's cigar went out and he flung it into the cuspidor. A man driving three cows passed the windows. A dog ran

across the street. Somebody over in front of the drugstore was whistling "Silver Threads Among the Gold."

Mr. Flickens rose and stretched himself. "Funny," he said, "how some folks get taken in by the most barefaced swindles. I guess I'll go home and have a nap."

Next Mr. Perkins got out of his chair. "Beats all," he remarked. "When there are so many good investments right at home. Well, my sweet corn needs hoeing. So long!"

Mr. Wellspeak looked at Mr. Peckham. Mr. Peckham looked at Mr. Wellspeak. There was a silent and tacit agreement to say nothing. They shook hands and went out by opposite doors.

When Mr. Flickens left the hotel he went across to his grocery store, unlocked the door and went in. Then he took up a position far enough back from the window to be invisible, yet in eye range of the door of the Commercial Hotel.

When Mr. Perkins left the group he also went to his store, and took up much the same point of vantage. Likewise did Messrs. Wellspeak and Peckham. So it happened that, at one and the

same time, four pairs of eyes were fastened on the entrance of the hotel.

After a while Mr. Flickens opened the door of the grocery store and peered out. The street was free of bystanders, at least of the obnoxious kind. Mr. Flickens then turned the key in the lock and hustled across the street to the side door of the hotel, paused a moment on the steps, and went quickly inside.

Coincidently with this act, three men, from their crow's nests, spoke bitterly to themselves.

"Darn his hide!" said Mr. Wellspeak.

"The cuss!" ejaculated Mr. Peckham.

"Just like Quincy Flickens!" was the comment of Mr. Perkins.

Meanwhile Mr. Flickens, the popular grocer, approached the desk and inquired as to the whereabouts of Montagu De Blon.

"I think he's in his room," replied the clerk. "Shall I have him come down?"

Mr. Flickens looked around cautiously. "No," he replied. "I'd better go up."

"I'll send up the boy with your name."

"If it's all the same to you, Henry, I'll *go* up," said the grocer. "If my name was to go up, I've got an idea Mr. De Blon wouldn't be there."

"I guess it's all right, Mr. Flickens. Go right up."

Mr. De Blon, as a matter of fact, was very much in his room. He was *en déshabillé,* sitting at the open window, with his feet cocked up on the sill, studying the "Business Directory of the State," and making careful notations on what he referred to, in private, as his "sucker list." On his sucker list appeared, as you may have guessed, the names of Messrs. Peckham, Flickens, Wellspeak and Perkins, all of Starrton.

There was a hesitating knock on the door. Mr. De Blon's feet came down from the sill, and he asked: "Who is it?"

A male voice outside answered, so Mr. De Blon neglected to conceal his excellent underwear, and called: "Come in!"

Mr. Flickens came in. He stood at the door a moment, and then cried: "Mr. De Blon, you are a swindler!"

"Shut the door," said Mr. De Blon, as though this was the ordinary and expected greeting between business men. "And take off your coat, if you want to. Ain't it hot!"

Mr. Flickens ignored the remark. He put his hat on the bed and stood with his eyes searching

the face of the other man for evidence of guilt. "I'll have the law on you, sure as you live," he threatened. "You've got a cheek to come back here, I must say! You and your Vulture Radium!"

"It's a good proposition," replied Mr. De Blon, without winking an eyelash. "It has had reverses. So do many good companies. Look at the New Haven! Look at Rock Island!"

"I don't want to look at New Haven—no, nor Rock Island," replied the grocer. "I want you to take back that worthless stock, and give me my money, or there'll be trouble."

"I don't want any trouble," admitted the other man in his melodious voice. In fact, he almost sang it. "Have you got your stock here?"

Mr. Flickens shook his head. "But I can get it in a jiffy," he said.

"Come to the hotel at eight o'clock to-night, and cash it in, if you've got cold feet. But I warn you the day will come when you'll be sorry."

"I'll take a chance on that," replied the grocer. "But this eight o'clock business—I don't much care for that. Chances are you'll be miles away by that time."

There was a suggestion of a sneer in Mr. De Blon's soft voice. "Surround the hotel with militia," he advised. "Arm them to the teeth, and train your guns on the windows."

The grocer reddened to the ears. "All right," he said. "I'll be here." Then he went downstairs.

At the door of the hotel he met Mr. Perkins coming in. "Ah, Dill," he said, "back again? I left my handkerchief on the chair."

"Funny," replied Mr. Perkins, "I lost my glasses somewhere. Came back to see if I could find them."

Mr. Perkins did not find his glasses. One reason was because they were in his pocket. Another reason was because he did not look for them. He got the number of Montagu De Blon's room from the clerk, and went gingerly upstairs and knocked.

Mr. De Blon laid aside his sucker list without the least show of impatience. He listened to the impassioned display of invective from the hardware dealer, with no visible surprise, indignation or other feeling except sympathetic interest.

"What is the matter with Collapsible Canoe?" he asked.

"The big matter with it is, it has collapsed," replied the hardware man with grim humor. "And you knew it would, you faker."

"It is still sold on the curb," reminded the itinerant broker.

"Not on any curb I can get to, to sell mine. Now, Mr. Man, I've frivoled away enough time as it is. Are you going to make good, or am I going to get out a warrant for you?"

"I wish Mr. Flickens were here," sighed Mr. De Blon.

"Flickens!" cried the hardware man. "What for?"

"He would speak for me. He could tell you some things that I can't very well tell myself; because you wouldn't believe them if I told them. But if you want to withdraw from Collapsible Canoe just at the psychological moment, that's your loss, not mine. Come around at eight fifteen to-night and get your money—in full. Is that all right?"

"It is if you'll be here," replied the hardware man.

"Tear up the railroad tracks on both sides of the station," suggested the broker, with a pleasant smile and just a touch of irony.

"All right," was the sheepish reply. "Quarter past eight, then."

The exit of Mr. Perkins from the hotel was observed with relief by Mr. Wellspeak in the drygoods store and Mr. Peckham in the shoe emporium. Unaware of similar intentions, they emerged from their hiding places at the same moment. Mr. Peckham perceived Mr. Wellspeak first, and had time to dart back before being noticed. Mr. Wellspeak, on the other hand, strode into the hotel with the air of a man who had just come from home on an errand.

In a few minutes he came out, and soon afterward Mr. Peckham went in.

Their interviews had been short and satisfactory. Both had been somewhat personal in their first remarks to Mr. De Blon, but the sublime poise and good humor of that gentleman, together with his willing compliance with all demands, had mellowed them much. Both left the hotel with light steps and carefree countenances.

After the ordeal was over, Mr. De Blon stuck his head out the window and surveyed the square. He rang for a boy and inquired of the clerk whether there were any more persons waiting to see him. Upon receiving a negative answer,

he began to dress himself from an ideal and up-to-date wardrobe trunk.

Mr. De Blon laid his sucker list down on the chiffonier, where he could review it while adjusting his tie. Suddenly he smiled and sat down on the edge of the bed, and gave voice to his optimistic sentiment:

"Once a sucker, always a sucker!"

Mr. De Blon wrote on the back of a card the following appointments, exercising the greatest care to get them in the exact order:

8 o'clock, Mr. Flickens.
8:15, Mr. Perkins.
8:30, Mr. Wellspeak.
8:45, Mr. Peckham.

Then Mr. De Blon, who was in a very jovial and happy frame of mind, took out his superb thin-model watch, and saw sixty seconds marked off by the second hand. When the circle had been completed, and the sixtieth second was reached, Mr. De Blon remarked,

"Another one has just been born."

If there was one class of men whose psychology was better understood by Montagu De Blon than any other class, it was the hard-

headed business man. He knew, for instance, that the hard-headed business man has much in common with that heroine of Shakespeare who never told her love, but let concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on her damask cheek. He knew that the hard-headed business man never tells his investments, but prefers to let the canker of deferred dividends nibble at his bank roll.

A merchant in a small town like Starrton is, so far as his customers are permitted to know, always just able to meet his bills. If the customers of Mr. Flickens, the popular grocer, were to learn that Mr. Flickens actually had a surplus of money to invest, they might reasonably refuse to pay their accounts, on the democratic ground that Flickens was rich enough already and was grinding the noses of the poor. Thus it happened that long after the town pauper has acquired a two-cylinder automobile, the tradesman is still driving a wornout buggy behind Old Bess, and clinging to his celluloid collars.

This policy of secretiveness was well known to Montagu De Blon, and was his bulwark in times of stress.

About twenty minutes before eight o'clock Mr.

De Blon took from his handbag a large folded linen map of Peru, and spread it out on the table that occupied the center of the room. He likewise took out a squarish block of dark-colored substance, which rebounded to the touch, and placed that on the map. Then he unfastened his beautiful diamond necktie pin and, looking fondly at the map of the Peruvian republic, toyed with the pin and awaited the hour of eight.

Thus, when Mr. Flickens rapped and entered, almost on the stroke of the town clock, he found the stock peddler gazing at the map and just in the act of stabbing a certain remote village with the pin point.

"Ah, Mr. Flickens," said the stock seller, "*there* is wealth! Untold wealth!"

"Where?" was the natural response of a man who dreamed of sudden enrichment o' nights.

"*There!* Where the pin is sticking. Putobamba, the heart of the richest rubber country in the world. There's a sample. Pure Para rubber, first grade stuff, worth its weight in gold!"

Mr. Flickens pushed at the elastic mass with his finger, and was about to inquire further, when he recollected that he had come to the room for

another purpose. "I brought that stock," he said, showing a large envelope.

"Good! Have a chair. Putobamba, Mr. Flickens. Remember that name. It's Spanish. It's a name to conjure with in the investment world to-day. Do you know"—here Mr. De Blon's voice fell to a purring confidence—"who is buying Putobamba, secretly?"

"No," replied Mr. Flickens.

Mr. De Blon walked over close to the popular grocer—because even the walls have ears. He leaned down and whispered the first letter of a magic name "R."

"Rock—" uttered Mr. Flickens, shrewdly.

"Something like that," was the quizzical reply. "You're not such a bad guesser."

"I guessed wrong on Vulture Radium," replied Mr. Flickens soberly.

"I'm not so sure about that, Mr. Flickens. I'll admit the company has had reverses. Look at New Haven. Look at Rock Island—"

"I have looked at them," responded the grocer. "But it's when I look at Vulture Radium that I—"

Mr. De Blon laughed. "Don't worry," he said. "I'll take it off your hands. I'll hold it myself—though I've got about all the stuff I can look

out for. Besides, I don't mind telling you that every cent I can spare is going right here." And he touched the pin that perforated the richest spot in the world—Putobamba.

"Putobamba," repeated Mr. Flickens. The clever reader will observe, if he repeated the word "Putobamba" to himself a number of times, a certain hypnotizing effect of the syllables.

"Putobamba," purred Mr. De Blon. "You know rubber costs money, Mr. Flickens."

"Gosh, yes," assented the grocer, thinking of automobile tires.

"They talk about planting rubber trees," continued the salesman ironically. "Planting them! I'd rather throw my money into the street than plant rubber trees with it. It's the wild trees, the big native trees, that are found in the heart of the Peruvian jungle—those are the little gold mines of vegetable life.

"But you came to cash in on that other stuff. I'm letting my enthusiasm kill too much time. Now we'll—"

"Putobamba!" said Mr. Flickens softly to himself.

"Putobamba!" replied Mr. De Blon.

Mr. Flickens rose and looked on the map.

He followed the line of the gold pin down to a spot on the map that was surrounded with a red line.

"Everything inside that red line is our concession from the Peruvián government," explained Mr. De Blon, without being asked.

"That's where they practise terrible cruelty on the natives, to force them to get rubber," remarked Mr. Flickens, who read the papers carefully.

Mr. De Blon showed a worried face. "Mr. Flickens," he said, "you've put your finger on the weak spot in this proposition. Do you think —do you think for a minute—that this stock would be selling for fifty-five cents a share if there wasn't something the matter with it? You've nailed it on the head. There is something the matter with it. There *is* terrible cruelty down there. That's why a lot of people won't go into it. I don't blame you for not wanting to touch it. The way they treat those Indians is a crying outrage!"

Mr. Flickens hesitated a moment. "Indians are usually a poor lot," he suggested.

"Putobamba," muttered Mr. De Blon, to himself.

"Putobamba," replied Mr. Flickens, not with his mouth, but with his brain.

"I could allow you what you paid for Vulture Radium," said Mr. De Blon. "But, mind you, I don't deny the stories of cruelty. They're true. It's—damnable."

"My great-great-grandfather was scalped by an Indian," was the reply. "I got no use for the critters. If you'll come to my store Monday, during the noon hour, I'd like to hear more about this proposition. I don't mind trading this other stuff for something—"

There was a knock. "Come in!" ordered Mr. De Blon; and Mr. Perkins, the hardware man, entered.

"Perkins!" exclaimed Flickens.

"Flickens!" cried Perkins.

"Mr. Flickens," said the stock peddler, in what was perhaps an unnecessarily penetrating voice, "do you mind saying, before you go, that you are satisfied with my business treatment of you?"

Not for a thousand worlds would Mr. Flickens, in the presence of Mr. Perkins, have denied any such thing. He held out his hand and took Mr. De Blon's in his. "Absolutely!" he said.

"Thank you, sir."

When Mr. Flickens had gone, Mr. Perkins remarked, in a chill tone: "I can see that Flickens didn't buy Collapsible Canoe."

"No, he didn't," replied the other. "But don't you worry. I'll take it off your hands dollar for dollar. And, Mr. Perkins, *there* is wealth! Untold wealth!"

"Where?" asked Mr. Perkins, looking around him.

"*There!* Where the pin is sticking. Putobamba, the heart of the richest rubber country in the world. There's a sample. Pure Para rubber, first grade stuff, worth its weight in gold."

"Huh!" exclaimed Mr. Perkins.

"Putobamba," said Mr. De Blon. "Do you know"—in a low, almost inaudible tone—"who is buying Putobamba, secretly?"

And, strange to say, Mr. Perkins, like Mr. Flickens, guessed right the very first time. And likewise did Mr. Wellspeak and Mr. Peckham.

It was a Saturday night in the late autumn. It was the Saturday night that the Starrton Lodge of Gazelles gave their first annual oyster supper

in the Grange Hall, over the fire station. Among those present were:

Washington Peckham, the shoe man, known to his intimates as "Wash"; J. Q. A. Flickens, the popular grocer, commonly called "Quincy"; Horace Wellspeak, drygoods and notions, just across from the Odd Fellows' Block; and Dillingham Perkins ("Dill," they call him), the hardware man.

A peculiar feature of oyster suppers, as well as of other forms of entertainment in Starrton, is that most of the males in attendance enjoy the diversion by absenting themselves as far as possible from the scene of festivities. That is, if you want to find those who are most supremely getting their money's worth, you want to look in some anteroom or thither corner. There sit a group of gentlemen, smoking and telling stories, and blissfully unconscious of what is going on at the firing line of oystery.

Wash Peckham and Quincy Flickens and Horace Wellspeak and Dill Perkins, having accompanied their respective consorts as far as the refreshment table, withdrew to the happy quiet of the smoking room, opened a fresh deck of cards and began to play bid whist.

It was Horace Wellspeak's deal, and Mr. Perkins had just cut the cards when Wash Peckham remarked, in an inconsequential tone: "I hear some talk of putting an electric road through here to Williamsville."

"There's a promoter in town now," added Mr. Flickens.

"It won't pay," said Mr. Wellspeak.

"Money thrown away," said Mr. Perkins.

"The promoter says the preferred will be sold at par, with a bonus of common stock," suggested Mr. Wellspeak.

"Risky business," replied Mr. Flickens.

"Not for my money," said Mr. Perkins.

"Nor mine."

"Not for me."

"Nope."

"Speaking of investments," said Mr. Wellspeak, "what do you think of the idea of putting up a new block here in the village?"

"Can't see it," said Mr. Perkins.

"Nor I."

"Enough blocks now," said Mr. Flickens.

"Just so," said Mr. Peckham.

"They talk of developing water power from the Black River, just above Chelsea, and supply-

ing all these towns and cities below with light and power," said Mr. Peckham, after a moment's silence.

"Wild idea," said Mr. Wellspeak.

"Engineers want some big fees for plans; that's the game," said Mr. Perkins.

"Don't believe it could be done, anyway," said Mr. Flickens.

"Funny what suckers they take us for, these so-called big financiers," said Mr. Peckham.

"Frenzied finance is the biggest reason for the high cost of living," remarked Mr. Wellspeak.

"What little money I can save, over and above my expenses," observed Mr. Perkins, "goes into the savings bank. Four per cent in the hand is worth ten per cent that you never get."

"Or for a reasonable extension of business," said Mr. Flickens.

Mr. Peckham leaned back in his chair and crossed his long legs just above the ankles. "I stopped into the hotel on my way down here," he said; and blew a ring of smoke up at the kerosene lamp above their heads.

Then he went on: "And whose name should I see on the register but Montagu De Blon!"

"Montagu De Blon?" asked Mr. Flickens, as

though the name were somehow familiar but memory refused to respond lucidly.

"Montagu De Blon?" asked Mr. Wellspeak, struggling to recall anybody of his acquaintance by that peculiar name.

"Montagu De Blon?" asked Mr. Perkins wonderingly.

"I did a hard day's work, and I'm beginning to feel sleepy," said the popular grocer.

"It's the furnace heat and the smoke," replied the shoe man. "I'm about ready to get my wife and go home."

"Mrs. Perkins' mother is with us," said the hardware dealer. "We don't like to leave the old lady alone long."

"Cards don't interest me as they did in my younger days," said the fourth tradesman.

And so the hard-headed business men of Starrton gathered up their families and departed at an hour that was considered, by their families, absurdly early. But there are many oyster suppers, and only one Montagu De Blon.

Yes, there are many oyster suppers in Starrton, taking one year with another; but there is only one rich rubber district in the world, and that is in Peru. There is only one place where

six thousand dollars' worth of celery can be raised on one acre of land, and that is in the Florida Everglades. There is only one opportunity to become a part owner of the biggest deposits of Vanadium ore on the five continents —and that is in Van Dusen's Land, near the Arctic Circle.

Reader, meet the hard-headed business men! Hard-headed business men, meet the reader! What will you have?

THE LESSER FLEAS

Great fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite 'em;
And little fleas have lesser fleas, and so *ad infinitum*.
—*Old Stuff*.

DICK BURNELL, otherwise known as Foxy Burnell, came to the fair-grounds early in the morning and set up his stand. The Mad River Valley Fair, at Dillonvale, is not a big State fair; it is not even a county fair; it is just a sort of neighborhood fair. Consequently it has fewer visitors who come to see the gentleman in pink tights go up in a balloon and come down, if lucky, in a parachute; and more people who come to see the cattle, the horses, the hogs, and the giant pumpkins.

Dick Burnell had discovered that business in his line was always better at one of these little fairs. There were fewer Coney Island attractions in competition.

With a borrowed hammer and nails Mr. Burnell created a small table, of which the top

slightly inclined. He covered this table with a piece of green baize, which he took from a businesslike black bag. From the same black bag he took three octagonal wooden blocks, each face of which bore a number. Also he had with him a number of cheap watches, articles of gaudy, plated jewelry, and a revolver that looked suspiciously second-hand. Each article was attached to a card, and each card bore a number.

You get the idea, probably. You paid Mr. Burnell a small sum of money for the privilege of setting the three octagonal blocks rolling down the inclined table. The sum of the three numbers uppermost when the blocks ceased rolling was your total. If it corresponded with a number that indicated a watch, you got the watch. Simple!

Mr. Burnell, the proprietor of this mushroom establishment, was a young man of medium height, thick-set, and passably well dressed. His black derby hat was tilted back a little, displaying a high forehead and a fringe of black, curly hair. His eyes were deep-set, with projecting lids that gave them something of the almond shape that we associate with Orientals. His cheeks were full and clean shaven.

What was most noticeable about the young man, besides his strictly business-like air, was a certain sophistication, a look of quiet, passive cynicism. He seemed like a person who had lost all illusions. Probably he had. He had been following circuses and fairs for seven years.

Among the early comers on the fair-grounds was a tall man with a broad-brimmed hat, who wore an official badge. He spotted the stranger at once, and came over to him.

"What you doing here?"

"Looking for business."

"Who told you to come?"

"Nobody. I thought you'd probably like another attraction. It's a straight game. Try a roll. Go on, try it! It won't cost you anything."

The tall man looked perplexed. He had an official duty, but he also had a human curiosity. He lifted up one end of the box that held the blocks and set them rolling. They rolled halfway down the plane and stopped.

"Five—three—four," counted the operator. "That's twelve. Twelve is a—sure enough, twelve is a watch. Here, take it! Go on, take it! Guaranteed for one year. See, it's a standard brand. Absolutely no fake about this. Of

course, the chances are in my favor, or I wouldn't be here. Is it all right?"

"Why, I guess so," replied the official, taking the proffered watch with a sheepish grin.

A few minutes afterward another man came over and stared at the outfit. He threw back his outside coat, displaying a constable's shield.

"What's the game, young man?"

The young man explained briefly. At the same time he pulled out a couple of obviously good cigars.

"Smoke?" he suggested.

"Don't use them," replied the constable.

"Have a watch?"

The other man shook his head.

"No use for it."

Dick Burnell bent over with a slightly sardonic smile.

"Ever have any use for this stuff?" he whispered, placing his hand upon the other man's.

The officer looked at something that stuck in his palm and coughed, looking around furtively. Then he said, gruffly:

"All right. No cheating, though—see?"

"Straight game, absolutely," replied the young man.

After the constable had walked away Dick put the blocks back in their box, replaced the captured watch with another, and muttered grimly:

"Grafters! All grafters!"

People had begun to swarm into the grounds. A few gathered, like a flock of roosters, cocking their heads questioningly, around Burnell's establishment.

"Try your luck!" he suggested, speaking to nobody in particular. "You can't lose! Every roll is a win, and the high numbers get the big prizes! Where's your sporting blood, gentlemen? Be game, boys! What good is your money after you're dead?"

About noon somebody won a watch from Dick. Dick let him, rather grudgingly. The winner, a farmer, was very happy about it. No doubt he remained happy about it until he remembered, while doing his chores that night, that it had cost him four dollars and a half to win a one-dollar watch.

About four o'clock in the afternoon another man won the revolver. Dick let him. This man was in ecstasy about his high fortune, and dis-

played it to an admiring crowd. This was the sort of advertising that Mr. Burnell liked. It created business. The man had paid over more than three dollars before he won the pistol; and besides, there was something the matter with the trigger and it couldn't be fired.

A little while later the village blacksmith, a French Canadian, tried his luck. He parted silently and hastily with the money in his pocket, amounting to seventy-five cents. Then he drew back and eyed the operator of the rolling blocks with an expression of betrayed confidence.

"By t'under, meester, dere is someding crook about dose number!" he cried out of an anguished heart.

"Back up now, boy!" said Mr. Burnell, without looking at his victim. "Don't stand in the way of these real sports here. Beat it!"

"Eet ees crook!" shouted the blacksmith, clenching his fists.

"Fade, lad, fade!" commanded Mr. Burnell. "Go get some more coin, and then I'll talk with you. Step up, gents, and roll the little blocks. No blanks!"

The smith looked at the little fake bits of "jewelry" that had been thrust upon him as a

consolation prize. For a minute his face seemed to bode danger, but the supreme self-confidence of the faker was too much for him, and he walked away, muttering strange, harsh sentiments in the language of Quebec.

As soon as the September sun got low behind the fringe of trees on the western edge of the fair-grounds, Dick Burnell put his little blocks and his watches and his cheap jewelry in the black bag, together with the green baize cloth. It was one of his rules to leave the scene of his operations a little earlier than too late. In every crowd there are hard losers who may be thoughtless and ungenerous enough to start trouble.

Dick had had a big day; but if it had been a bad day the expression on his face would probably have been the same. Good days and bad days—he took them all with perfect equanimity.

He stopped a moment at the merry-go-round to hail the proprietor.

"Had a good day, Joe?"

"Pretty fair."

"See you at East Durham?"

"Sure!"

"Going South after fair-time?"

"Don't know yet."

The rolling-block man hired an automobile to take him back to the hotel in the village. When he arrived there, he went up to his room and threw himself wearily on the bed. He had been on his feet all day. Only a policeman or a department-store clerk can really understand how he felt.

There was a knock at the door. A head came into the room and announced:

"Somebody down-stairs to see you."

"Tell 'em to come up," replied Dick Burnell drowsily.

A few minutes later there was another rap—a feeble one this time. In response to a bid from the bed an overgrown, freckled youth, about seventeen years old, edged his way into the room.

"Mister!" he said.

"My name's Burnell," said the faker, without looking up. "What d'ye want?"

A sniff and a choking sound brought Dick sitting upright. The face of the youth indicated that he was on the verge of tears.

"It—it wasn't my own money," he stammered.

"What wasn't your own money? What the—oh, I see! You're the wise young man that rolled for a watch to-day; and now you want your

money back, eh? I've seen lots of 'em like you, kid. They all want it back. The world is full of pikers like that."

"Honest, mister," said the overgrown boy, "I ain't like that! Some of it was my own, and I don't care about that; but the rest wasn't mine. I got excited—I thought—"

"Whose was it?" asked Dick suddenly.

"I been selling tickets to the church sale, and it—was that."

The lad was trying to restrain the tears.

"How much was it altogether? How much did you spend with me, I mean?"

"Two dollars and seventy-five cents."

Dick went into his pocket and counted out the amount. He flung it on the foot of the bed.

"Listen to me, you young embezzler," he said, lying down again. "You quit gambling. Anybody that gambles on anything is a fool. If you got to gamble, wait till you can afford to gamble big. By that time you'll probably be too wise to take any chances, anyway. And listen—whatever you do, don't gamble with other people's money. Now get out!"

"Oh, thank you—" began the boy.

"Get out and leave me alone," replied the man on the bed. "I'm tired."

There was no answer, and no sound of a retreat. A few moments passed, and then Dick Burnell popped up his head.

"You here yet?" he cried. "What do you want?"

The youth's face was cleared of its troubles. He grinned.

"I thought maybe you might take a couple of tickets to the church sale," he ventured.

"Well, of all the cast-iron nerve!" exclaimed the faker, bursting into a laugh. "Say, kid, you'd make a good ballyhoo with a medicine show. You get your money back, and then you soak me with—how much are those tickets?"

"Twenty-five cents each."

Dick pulled out a half-dollar from his vest-pocket and tossed it on the bed.

"Give me a couple. Leave 'em there on the bed. And say, when you get rich, kid, with that nerve of yours, and I come round on crutches asking for a piece of bread, don't set the dog on me!"

"You're all right," murmured the boy admiringly.

"I'm an easy mark, you mean," said Dick, lying down again. "Now get out, will you?"

A few minutes afterward Mr. Burnell got up, yawned, took the two tickets from the bed, threw them into the top drawer of the bureau, and went down to supper.

It was bad business instinct on the part of the managers of the church sale that they permitted the event to take place in the same week as the Mad River Valley Fair. The result was that the people of Dillonvale were short of money. The sale found itself in that predicament which so exasperates the managers of any commercial enterprise—a big crowd and no business.

It was about half past eight. A few of the young women behind the booths, having made timid efforts to arouse interest in their wares, and having failed, had arrived at the giggling stage. The face of the thin, pale young minister and the faces of the committee wore expressions that testified to their disappointment. There was the subdued hum of low talk, such as might be heard at funerals. A cloud was upon the scene, and the best efforts of the lightest-hearted could not blow it away.

It was just at this point that Dick Burnell, otherwise known as Foxy Burnell, entered the Odd-Fellows' Hall, where the sale was in progress.

The church sale had not been Dick's first choice of diversion. He had asked the hotel clerk whether there was a moving-picture show in town.

"Only Wednesdays and Saturdays," was the answer.

"Nothing going on at all?"

"Only the church sale."

"The church sale? Oh, that's what the kid sold me tickets for," said Dick. "Isn't there anything else? Isn't there a game a fellow could sit into?"

"A game of what—dominoes?" was the sarcastic answer of the clerk, who came from a larger town than Dillonvale, and never lost a chance to sneer at his present surroundings. "Why don't you drop over to the sale? I tell you one thing—you'll see some pretty girls there."

"With their mothers," Dick added.

"Yes, most of them. But you can look at them, anyway. That's something."

"I suppose it's better than going to bed," as-

sented the faker. "I'll drop in there, I guess, and see what's going on."

Dick put on his best necktie, flicked up his boots, and waved his front curly hair to his satisfaction, and then went over to Odd-Fellows' Hall.

The moment the faker passed through the door a feeling swept over him that he was somewhere he ought not to be. The smell of popcorn assailed his nostrils instead of the sawdust-and-beer odor with which he was more familiar. There was the delicate, modest scent of white dresses just taken out of bureau drawers, far different from the choking, musky perfume which he associated with the region of Thirty-sixth Street and Sixth Avenue, where he went into winter quarters.

"This is no place for anybody but a minister's son," he murmured to himself as he went in.

Still he had a curiosity to see what this world was like. It was certainly different from his—that is, the world of his mature years. He could faintly remember being dragged by his elder sister, years ago, to a place just like this in a town just like Dillonvale.

Dick's keen eye took in the business situation at once.

"All broke!" he said to himself. "Nobody spending money, and a very frosty temperature."

A hand-shaking young man with a collar that was nearly severing his jugular vein strode over to Dick and thrust out his hand.

"I don't believe I remember your name?" he asked perfunctorily.

"Burnell," replied the faker; "I'm a stranger."

"Oh, yes! My name is Perkins—Perkins & Son, shoe-store, you know. Very nice of you to come! Please enjoy yourself. This is the place to have a good time."

"Thanks," replied Dick. And he added, under his breath: "This is about as jolly as a police-station!"

Dick walked once around the hall, hoping that the young hand-shaker would introduce him to somebody, even if only to another hand-shaker; but nothing of the sort happened. A few of the younger people, gathered in groups, whispered, and Dick knew that he was the object of their conversation. It made him feel uncomfortable. He almost decided to make a dash for the door; but a stubborn feeling detained him.

"I'm just as good as they are, most of them," he thought. "They've got nothing on me. If there's anybody here that rolled for watches they wouldn't dare to open their mouths about it. Stick it out, old man; stick it out! Something interesting might turn up."

Being an old hand at the arts of stimulating business, Dick saw what was needed to set the sale on its feet. Somebody must begin to spend money. Somebody must set the example, and others would follow. So he began to buy.

He bought popcorn and gave it to small boys and girls, who took it with scared but thankful faces. He bought light fruit-cake and dark fruit-cake and ice-cream and home-made fudge and passed those around. Soon he had a timid following of young fry at a respectful yet watchful distance from his heels.

He bought a dozen handkerchiefs, two pairs of woolen mittens, and a knit sweater-vest. He tried his luck at the fish-pond and the grab-bag, and fished forth and grabbed forth a quantity of rubbishy things which he dropped in places where they might be found by somebody that wanted them.

From booth to booth Dick traveled, spending money impartially and carelessly at each one. One or two shy, grateful smiles, and some pleasant words from the young women behind the booths, made the color come into his hardened cheeks.

Dick's ruse proved effective for a while. Those of the other men who had money began to loosen their grip on it. Those who hadn't apparently borrowed some. The sale began to liven up. The hum of voices became more confident. The set faces of the committee relaxed. As Dick passed the minister, the minister actually smiled at him and nodded.

But the rush of business was short-lived. The Mad River Valley Fair had really taken too much money out of the pockets of the townsfolk. Something had to be done. There was a hurried consultation in an anteroom, which resulted in an addition to the program.

A tall man, with a stick of fire-wood in his hand, knocked for order.

"Sh-h-h-h!" said every one to every one else. "Mr. Osgood's going to speak. S-s-s-s!"

"Ladies and gentlemen!" announced the orator. "Attention!"

"Sh-h-h-h! Can't you keep that boy quiet, Annie?"

"Keep him quiet yourself, James. I told him to hush."

"Stand over there a little, will you, please? I can't see him."

"That's right, thanks!"

"Ladies and gentlemen! I am instructed by the committee in charge to announce that, as an added attraction, and to make things more interesting, Mr. Parmenter, one of our most generous workers, has offered his roan horse and high-seated carriage to be sold for the benefit of the church. There will be one hundred numbered tickets—Mr. Perkins is now kindly making them. Each ticket will have a duplicate. Each ticket will be sold at one dollar—one dollar! The duplicate tickets will be placed in a—er—receptacle, and one of the children will draw one out. The number drawn will win the horse and carriage. I am instructed to announce that the horse alone is worth the entire sum. I am sure we all thank Mr. Parmenter again and again. All those who do not clearly understand the conditions will please come forward."

"Now that's something like!" said Dick Bur-

nell, turning to his neighbor, a watery-eyed young man. "They ought to have advertised it in advance; then they'd have had a real crowd."

"They won't sell anywhere near all the tickets," replied the young man. "You wait and see if they do. A dollar is too much."

There was another series of raps.

"I should have said," continued the announcer, "that there will be no blanks. Everybody will get something. That will make it seem—er—more proper, as well. Mr. Darling, the popular druggist, has kindly offered ninety-nine boxes of confectionery at cost, to be given to the less fortunate ones who do not—er—obtain the horse and—er—carriage. Come now, every gentleman should buy at least one chance!"

There arose a bustle and stir at one side of the hall. Then there was a measured tramping of feet, and a column of five men, composed of Dillonvale's most solid citizens, marched up to the platform. Each deposited a dollar and received a ticket. It was done with the precision and speed of a bread-line; and it was so evidently planned—that is, the planning was so evident to Dick Burnell—that he gasped with appreciative delight.

"Gee, they know the game!" he said to himself. "Those fellers are shillabers! But they did it rotten. They ought to have straggled up, kind of slow, from different parts of the hall."

A few other men came forward with their precious dollars and got tickets. There was an uneasy stirring throughout the room. Low whispers were audible to Dick:

"A dollar's too much!"

"Sh-h-h! Maybe Parmenter'll draw the horse himself."

"If the price was lower they could sell more."

Thump! Thump! Thump! The announcer proclaimed:

"Please don't be backward, gentlemen! Remember, it's in a good cause, and there are no blanks. Step forward, gentlemen!"

But the gentlemen showed little inclination to step forward. Indeed, they showed much more of a disposition to step backward, out of the range of seduction.

Dick Burnell elbowed his way up to the front and bought two tickets. One lone imitator followed suit, though buying but one ticket.

Then there was a long, dull, painful pause.

The announcer rapped and rapped again; but enthusiasm was dead.

"Don't let it be a failure!" pleaded the announcer. "Remember Mr. Parmenter's generosity—and Mr. Darling's. We need the money terribly!"

There was no reply to the appeal. The sale had come to one of those *impasses* so well known to Dick. Many a time, on the fair-grounds, he had felt the chill breath of the same evil spirit.

Dick shifted uneasily back and forth. He itched to jump to the front, seize that stick of fire-wood, rap for attention, and sell those tickets. He had a wild idea of offering his services; but he didn't dare to do it.

"Must it be a failure?" pleaded the announcer. "Don't you think you could afford one chance, gentlemen—and ladies? I must not forget the ladies."

It was too much for Dick Burnell. He was clenching his fists in excitement.

"Pikers!" he was snarling under his breath. "Pikers! Tightwads! Loosen up, you yokels!"

He had made up his mind suddenly. The horse and carriage—they would not be so bad. He could drive across country to the remaining

fairs, save mileage, and have some fun. He could sell them at the last fair of the season and get something out of them, anyway.

"How many tickets have you sold?" cried Dick in a loud voice that turned every head toward him.

"Sixteen," replied Perkins, the young handshaker.

"I'll take the rest of them," said Dick. "Here's your money."

The crowd parted as he sprang forward.

With an air of conscious superiority Dick took a roll of bills from his pocket and skinned off the necessary eighty-four dollars. It left the roll sadly emaciated, to be sure, but the effect on the spectators was galvanic. Mr. Perkins, of Perkins & Son, took the money gingerly, as if he felt that there was something wrong about it. He swept up the remaining tickets and passed them over.

Dick glanced around. Every pair of eyes was fixed on him. Over at the right he saw the freckled-faced youth to whom he had returned the embezzled funds pointing a finger at him and talking volubly to his neighbor.

"Don't you know who that feller is?" the boy

was saying, gurgling with excitement at being able to impart sensational information. "That's the feller that stuck a lot of people out on the fair-grounds to-day. Didn't I see him raking in money just as fast as folks could hand it over? Yes, sirree, he's a regular gambler, that feller is! No wonder he's got money to chuck away!"

"The way you talk, I guess he trimmed you," suggested somebody.

"Me?" snorted the virtuous lad with the freckles. "Huh, I got more sense than to play them games!"

"I don't think I remember your name," said Mr. Perkins, poising a pencil over a long sheet of paper.

"Burnell—Richard Burnell," replied Dick.

"Ah, yes, I recall now. A stranger, you said. I guess you've saved the day, Mr. Burnell. You fairly took our breath away, though."

"When I plunge, I plunge," replied Dick. "These little piking bets make me tired."

A quick flush overspread Mr. Perkins's cheeks. The word "bet" was rather ill-chosen; but Dick, with the perfectly honest spirit of the gambler, never suspected that he had said anything inept. He stuck his hands nonchalantly into his trouser-

pockets and fed himself liberally upon his new popularity. He had shown 'em! There was one sport in the room, anyway! Now let others come to the front!

It couldn't be said that the holders of the other sixteen numbers were pleased, however. They had evidently hoped that many of the tickets would remain unsold, thus increasing their own chances of drawing the prize. One or two of them glared at Dick as if he had committed some strange crime. But against this Mr. Burnell had the pleasant consciousness that a number of young women were looking at him with the curious admiration justly due to a man who can show eighty-four dollars and spend it like a prince.

There was a wait of about five minutes before the drawing of the important ticket could be effected. The crowd hung around the platform, though Dick retreated to the rear. One or two of the younger men came up to him and offered congratulations.

"You're a sport, all right! Hope you win!"

"I guess that took the wind out of the shellbacks, all right!"

"Say, got any more where that came from?"

"What are you going to do—start a livery-stable?"

The announcer came out and rapped for order.

"The winning ticket," he called, "is No. 21. Who has No. 21?"

Dick had so many tickets that he hadn't even looked at them. He took them out of his pocket and put them in his hat, throwing out one after another. Suddenly he smiled, held up a card, and said:

"I've got it!"

A murmur of relief ran through the crowd.

"Please to step forward," called the announcer. When Dick approached the platform he leaned over and asked: "Your name?"

"Burnell," replied Dick rather savagely. He had given his name so many times that it sounded more or less idiotic when he uttered it.

"Mr. Burchell?"

"Yes," replied Dick peevishly.

"Mr. Burchell wins the horse and carriage!" came the announcement. "Mr. Burchell holds ticket No. 21, and is the fortunate man. I am glad to present him with this slip of paper, which is an order for the prize. The horse has been left with Peter Dubois, the blacksmith. Any one will

point out his shop to you, sir. I am sure we all congratulate you."

"Thanks," replied Dick, taking the paper.

"You are also entitled to eighty-four boxes of confectionery, I believe, Mr. Burchell. Here they are, on the edge of the platform."

Dick looked at the boxes and grinned broadly. They were the sample boxes which generally retail at ten cents, and probably cost the storekeeper five or six cents apiece.

"Just like my jewelry!" thought Dick, remembering his own consolation stickpins that cost him two dollars a gross, and permitted him truthfully to say that he had no blanks in *his* little game.

"I never use candy," said Dick. "Pass it round to the kids. The horse and carriage is all I need. Much obliged! Where's Peter Dubois, anyway?"

"You'll find him in the rear of the shoe-store. He'll deliver on receipt of the order you have."

"Well, I've got it," said Dick to himself. "I guess I can make some use of it."

Dick went over to the side of the hall, found a chair, and sat down. He looked contentedly around at the people.

"Good people," he thought, "but they've got no nerve. When they've spent a dollar and a quarter they want to go home. That's the reason they never get anywhere—never do anything big. They just pike along, pike along."

"Excuse me," said a hollow, uncertain voice beside him.

Dick turned quickly. It was the minister, standing right there, with a red face and nervous, excited manner.

"Mr. Bur—"

"—nell," supplied Dick grimly.

"Mr. Burnell, may I ask what your business is?"

Dick's studied poise did not prevent him, thus suddenly accosted, from showing a slight agitation.

"Why?" he asked. "What difference does it make?"

"I am informed," went on the minister, with the air of a man who has a painful task to perform, "that you were at the fair-grounds to-day with a kind of business which—if I may say so—is not very nice. Er—illegal, I might say. I didn't see you myself. I am so informed, that's all."

"I run a little game," replied Dick uncomfortably. "It's no worse—"

"Really, we won't discuss that point," was the reply. "To tell you the truth, this is a very hard position for me—very. If I consulted my own feelings, I should say nothing about it, I believe; but there are a number of very fine ladies present who wish me to say—*that if you remain here, they will leave the hall.* May I trust to your discretion, Mr. Bur—er—"

The grim smile was gone from Dick Burnell's lips. His face was as crimson as that of the minister's. A hundred angry retorts came into his mind, and he had to shut his teeth hard to keep them back. He looked around at the people. He could see plainly that every one understood what was going on—that it had been talked over in advance.

"In regard to the money you have just spent with us," continued the minister, "it is my wish that as a matter of justice it should be returned to you—"

"Not on your life!" said Dick, breathing hard. "What do you take me for—a squealer? Good night!"

He felt a hand laid on his shoulder, as if the

other man had something further to say. He paid no attention.

"What do you know about that?" he said, aloud, when he reached the street. "Now what do you know about that?"

In the morning Dick felt better. He reasoned it out pretty well for a young man whose pride had been so wounded.

"You can't blame them," he said to himself. "My game does look pretty rotten to them, I suppose. Anyway, I've got the horse and outfit. If I can get started by ten o'clock, I can get into East Durham to-night, in time for the fair to-morrow."

He lost no time getting to the shop of Peter Dubois. The big, muscular figure of the blacksmith loomed up before him in the doorway.

"Here's an order for the horse and carriage they raffled at the sale last night," said Dick. "Got 'em ready? Hurry up, and I'll buy you a nice spreading chestnut-tree."

Peter didn't move. He leaned against the forge and began to send forth peals of laughter, holding both sides with his hands.

"Is this a fit, or has something funny been said?" exclaimed Dick impatiently.

"I'm ver' sorry for you," replied Peter, with a throb in his chest that belied his words. "I ver' sorry. You in ver' hard luck, meester."

"Embalm the sorrow and produce the horse," said Dick.

"Ho, ho!" shouted Peter. "You take my money, my seventy-five cents, yesterday—*just like that,*" he said, snapping his fingers. "But now I laugh two dollar worth. Ho, ho! Dat hoss, *she die las' night!*"

Dick winced. He grasped at a rack of horse-shoes for support. Then, as he recovered his balance, he asked with a cynical smile, repeating Peter's words as he had heard them:

"Dat hoss she die las' night, did she?"

Peter nodded.

"An' 'nudder t'ing is," he added, "I shoe her yeste'y—bran'-new shoes. I have to ask you to take de carcass away and pay me one dollar and quarter for shoes. Ver' sorry! You come out in de yard and I show you de hoss."

"Never mind about that, Peter," said Mr. Burnell, still smiling grimly. "She was probably a good horse in her day. Tell Mr. Parmenter for me that he is one very fly gentleman. Tell him he ought to be running a shell-game. You can

keep the carriage to pay you for the shoes. Have a cigar, Pete? Have two cigars? I got to be going now, to catch that next train down-country."

THE HERO

I

THE cry of "Help!" uttered by Mr. Josiah Swain as he fell into the North River was so dignified and impersonal that Herbie Turvey, who was loafing along the bank, hesitated a moment about pulling him out. It seemed a job for one of the high town officials rather than for a youth who was generally referred to both in private and public as "that young scamp." However, Herbie concluded that delay would be dangerous, and in a few minutes Mr. Josiah Swain stood dripping upon his own threshold. There he spoke to his rescuer for the first time.

"I thank you, Herbert," he said, holding out a lean hand.

"That's all right, Mr. Swain," replied Herbie. "I hope you don't get cold."

Mr. Swain turned to go into the house. He paused with his hand on the knob, and added impressively: "I knew your father well, Herbert. We were in the same company in the war."

Then he went in.

Herbie walked along homeward, with his hands in his pockets, whistling thoughtfully. "Darned funny!" he thought. "Last time he called me Herbert was when he was trying to have me sent to the reform school."

When Herbie got home, he was still dripping. His mother looked up from her sewing, saw the moist figure, and for the ten-thousandth time since Herbie began to wear trousers was terrified. She concluded that he had again been "jumping logs" on the river.

"Mr. Swain just fell in the river, and I yanked him out," Herbie explained.

Mrs. Turvey suffered another violent shock. Saving the life of Mr. Swain, the richest man in Pike's Falls, was a proceeding almost as hazardous as jumping logs.

"I did, honest and true, Ma," repeated Herbie.

Mrs. Turvey put on her shawl and went over to Mrs. Dickson's. "What do you think," she said—"Herbert has just saved Mr. Swain's life! He fell into the river, and Herbert grabbed him just as he was going down for the third time."

Both women finally agreed that it was queer a

man with all Mr. Swain's money had to be poking around that dangerous log-drive at his age.

Mrs. Dickson told Mrs. Skinner about the rescue. Mr. Skinner was editor of the Pike's Falls *Gazette*. So, a little later, Mr. Skinner came over to Mrs. Turvey's house, where Herbie was getting a hot mustard bath, of which he was in no need, and questioned the young man as he stood in a washtub in the kitchen.

"So you saved Mr. Swain's life, Herbert," began Mr. Skinner. "Tell me all about it." Herbie told him.

"Did the old gentleman seem grateful, Herbie?" asked the editor.

"I didn't notice. He said something about serving with dad in the war." Mr. Skinner made a note of that.

"He didn't—er—offer you anything, did he?"

"No."

"Now you go right to bed, Herbert," said Mrs. Turvey, after the editor had gone. "I shouldn't wonder if you get a cold, as it is."

It was part of Herbie Turvey's vague ethical system to please his mother whenever possible. He was twenty-two years old, but he went upstairs with the appearance of filial obedience.

Two hours later, when his mother had gone to bed, Herbie put on his clothes, opened the window, dropped down on the roof of the woodshed, and went off across the moonlit fields. He had an appointment to stone skunks with Lev Dikeman.

On his part, Mr. Swain pondered the incident seriously before going to bed. He did not precisely resent being saved by an irresponsible youth like Herbie, but he would have preferred to select his own rescuer. The prospect seemed to hold some disagreeable possibilities, if the event should become generally known in Pike's Falls. Mr. Swain understood his neighbors far better than they understood him, and he felt that the market value of an heroic act is always determined by those who are in nowise directly concerned with it.

Having these unfortunate possibilities in mind, Mr. Swain went to the office of the Pike's Falls *Gazette* early the next morning, and found Mr. Skinner already at work. It was publication day.

"Good morning, Job," said Mr. Swain, who did not waste much time on the amenities of discourse. "I suppose you've heard of that lit-

tle accident last evening. You newspaper men hear everything."

"Why, yes, Mr. Swain," replied the editor. "I was just going to run over to your office. I kind o' thought you'd like to make some nice little statement. I'll take it down right now."

Mr. Swain tapped his cane impatiently. "Now, see here, Job, you don't want to make a splurge about this little thing. There's no reason why everybody should tittle-tattle about it. It didn't amount to much, anyway; they tell me the water isn't very deep there. And I mean to do the handsome thing by the young man. I was just on my way to the bank to get five-dollar gold pieces—and I thanked him yesterday."

"That's fine, Mr. Swain; but I thought I'd make a nice little notice about it in the *Gazette*. It ain't often the biggest man in Pike's Falls gets rescued from drowning; I think you are mistaken about the depth of the water there. Besides, it might be a big thing for Herbie. Why, it might chirk him up and make a man of him. You can't tell about those things."

Mr. Swain's gray eyes glistened with growing discontent. He was not a man to be argued with. When he spoke again it was with meaning em-

phasis. "I don't want anything printed about it, Job; that's all. If Herbie was different, I'd say yes, and glad of it. I'd take him into the mill and make something of him. But he ain't the working kind. You know what he is as well as I do. Fishing and shooting and stealing apples, and gallivanting around the country, is all he thinks of. I tell you, I ain't going to saddle him on myself just on account of a mere accident."

Job Skinner was not a poltroon, but he had a family and a newspaper property to look out for. Mr. Swain could ruin him by the turn of his hand; so he capitulated.

"Very well, Mr. Swain," he replied. "The *Gazette* won't mention it."

"Now you're showing the sensible spirit, Job," said Mr. Swain. "I'm much obliged to you." As he was leaving, he paused in the doorway and added: "By the way, you can print that quarter-page advertisement this week, if you want to. It don't do us any good,—our selling business ain't here,—but I like to show our appreciation of the home paper. Good day, Job."

"Old skinflint!" murmured Job as he went back to his shears.

At the bank Mr. Swain was further discomfited. The paying teller, after ringing the gold pieces on the marble counter, smiled knowingly and said: "We don't pay out many of these, Mr. Swain. I take it you're making a little present."

Mr. Swain scowled and stamped out.

Several persons greeted Mr. Swain on his way to his office. Their manner was deferential, as usual, but they showed that they knew something about their wealthy fellow-citizen that brought him a little nearer earth than he had been. Mr. Swain's displeasure increased when he realized that they were not thinking of him, of his power, of his affluence, but rather of him in connection with Herbie Turvey. They were no longer saying, "There goes Mr. Swain," but, "There goes Mr. Swain, whose life was saved by Herbie Turvey." It looked like a perpetual partnership to the old man, and he did not relish it.

The worse proof of the situation was awaiting the great "lumber king" in his own domain. As he entered the office, every eye appraised him covertly. Every employee was astonished to see how thin their monarch was, how stooped at the

shoulders, how white his hair. They had not realized before how near death this great man could come.

James Finck, the cashier, made bold by a service of twenty-six years behind the cashier's cage, greeted his employer with a round smile. "Well, Mr. Swain," he said, "we're glad to see you safe and sound. And to think that we should owe seeing you here to Herbie Turvey!"

Mr. Swain's pent-up feelings exploded. "If you've got work to do, Finck," he cried, "do it! If you've got nothing else to do except talk nonsense, go home!"

Herbie Turvey! Herbie Turvey! Everybody knew it, then. What need of a local newspaper, when news could be published so speedily without it! Mr. Swain was a man who knew how to make quick decisions. He took up the telephone and called the office of the *Gazette*.

"That you, Job? This is Josiah Swain. I've changed my mind about that article. You can print it. Don't overdo it, Job, that's all. Say a good word for the boy, of course—and, by the way, let that quarter-page advertisement wait for the present. Good-by."

So, at a stroke, Josiah Swain changed his

whole policy. His natural sagacity told him that if the news of the rescue did not appear in the *Gazette,* everybody in Pike's Falls would immediately guess why. Thus he would be accused of two serious things, ingratitude and coercion. It was far better for the present to accept the predicament of having Herbie Turvey forced upon him by public sentiment.

A man less keen in judging human nature would not so soon have accepted this as the only alternative. But Josiah Swain, though he loved money and power and distinction and homage, loved more than all these the good opinion of his neighbors. And the covetousness of that regard made him sensitive to shades of feeling which would have conveyed nothing to a less precise mind.

As he sat at his desk, Josiah weighed the situation with a nice balance. The facts, as they would be viewed in Pike's Falls, were simple, and called for a broadly simple treatment. Josiah Swain, with several millions, falls into the river. Herbie Turvey, worth nothing and of doubtful repute, pulls him out. He was not compelled to save the rich man. Consequently we may connote at this point something of nobility of char-

acter in favor of Herbie. What, now, does the rich man do?

It is an elementary drama. The audience has seen the first part. It has concluded what the second part should be: the rich man should have a daughter to whom the hero may be wed. But Josiah Swain had no daughter. Well, then, the poor boy should become the heir of the old man's millions. The audience, however, does not deal in intentions. It must see the papers passed. It must be at the reading of the will.

The rich man may do one thing or the other. He may assist the even movement of the drama toward a satisfactory climax, or he may ignore the audience, and, after making some quick settlement with the hero, show him the door. In the first case the rich man becomes a good man; in the second he assumes the part of a bad, ungrateful, and miserly old wretch. Public opinion will crown him or hurl anathema at him, as he chooses.

Josiah Swain elected to be a good rich man. He dictated a letter to the Pike's Falls *Gazette* in which he expressed his fervent thanks to the young man who rescued him from a watery grave. Though he knew that such service could

never be computed in terms of money, yet he trusted that the inclosed sum, which the editor would please take in charge, would be accepted in the spirit that prompted its giving; finally, that there was a place open for Herbie Turvey at the lumber mill, and an opportunity to work up to the highest place in the business.

Pike's Falls applauded. The drama had worked out to a happy ending.

When Job Skinner went to find Herbie, Mrs. Turvey could give only the vague information that he was "somewhere with Lev Dikeman, skittering for pickerel." At Ward's Pond Job found the young hero. He shouted the news to Herbie, who was in a boat some distance from shore.

"Gee! that's quite a thing!" said Herbie, in reply. "And, say, look at these pickerel. Ain't they beauties!"

II

Herbie Turvey had no desire to work for Mr. Swain. He had no desire to work for anybody. Nor did he feel that he had been a hero. He would have saved a mongrel dog just as readily and easily. But Pike's Falls placed him on his

honor. Having saved Josiah Swain, it now devolved upon him to carry out the rest of the program. So he reluctantly went to work.

Mr. Swain had no desire to place Herbie in the mill. He did not feel that the rescue, which cost Herbie no pains except drying his clothes, warranted any such importance as Pike's Falls placed upon it. But he, too, was put to the test by public opinion. So Herbie went on the payroll.

Mr. Swain turned the young man over to the mill superintendent, and endeavored to forget him as soon as possible. He was more fortunate than Herbie, for he had other things to do.

Herbie went into the planing department, where, for a whole day, the ceaseless energy of the great machines held his attention. After that, his was a soul marooned. The work did not interest him. The sun was bright outside, and the surrounding hills beckoned him mockingly. He began to grow restless; then he began to play. By the evening of the second day he had incapacitated a planer in an effort to find out whether it could plane other things besides wood.

The report of the foreman of the planing department concerning Herbie's activities during the first week sheds light upon the young man's aptitude for regular work:

Name, Herbert Turvey. Pay-roll number, 51. Planing Dep't.

Monday.—Rang in on time all day. Washed up ten minutes early at night.

Tuesday.—Rang in 36 minutes late A.M. Had to speak to him about bothering the men. Broke a planer. Disappeared at 5:30.

Wednesday.—Not here A.M. Came in at 1:30, left at 5 o'clock. Loafed all the time.

Thursday.—Very saucy to me. Would not punch the time-clock. Didn't see him after 1 o'clock.

Friday.—Absent all day.

Saturday.—Bothered the men. I sent him home at 2 P.M.

P.S. I recommend you to take him out of this department. He is N. G.

Respectfully, Griggs, Foreman.

Mr. Swain read this report, and then rolled it round his pencil thoughtfully. Then he unrolled it and read it again. Then he smiled. It was not much of a smile. It was just the smile of a man who has successfully predicted trouble for himself. "Make a memorandum to transfer

Turvey Monday morning," he said to his secretary.

"Where to, sir?"

"Where? Let me see. Good gracious! I don't know. Remind me of it Monday."

At about the same time Mrs. Turvey was commenting anxiously on Herbie's appearance. He did not look as well as usual.

"Herbie," she said, "you'd better ask Dr. Stone to-morrow if working in the mill is bad for the lungs."

"I should think 't would be, Ma," replied Herbie. "It makes me feel awful queer."

Monday morning Herbie dragged himself down to the mill, and began a new apprenticeship in the shipping department. This was something of an improvement, because he was out of doors most of the time. But regularity and discipline found no favor in his hitherto uncaged spirit. He was far too dynamic to be a good workman. His was not the hand to pile boards evenly; for where does Nature pile things so, save under protest?

Tuesday morning Herbie left off work to kill a water-rat, a thrilling encounter which left him unfit for routine for that day.

Wednesday Lev Dikeman came down to see his chum in his new occupation, and was sent about his business by the foreman. Herbie indignantly took Lev's part, and the two went away together.

Thursday the foreman sent word to Mr. Swain that "that young fellow won't work." So Thursday afternoon Herbie was called into the presence of the "lumber king."

Mr. Swain asked the young man to sit down, which he did, with a red face, twirling his hat between his hands. "I'll speak privately," said Mr. Swain to the stenographer, who immediately left the room. Having made sure that the doors were closed and that he would not be overheard, the old man sat back in his swivel-chair, and gazed at Herbie in a curious, half-embarrassed way.

"Well, Herbert," he said, at last, "you don't appear to be doing very well."

Herbie was silent.

"I never had such a chance when I was your age. I had no friends to push me along. But you rendered me a service, and I want to make some return. Now, you don't want to work; I

can see that. I felt it—er—incumbent, you might say, to give you a chance in the mill. People kind of expected it—"

"I didn't expect nothing," interrupted Herbie.

"No; I dare say you didn't. No, Herbert, I believe you didn't. But—"

Herbie could stand it no longer. Tears of exasperation and shame came into his eyes, and he blurted out: "I don't want no job. I never asked for no job. I never rendid no service. I wish I hadn't pulled ye out of the water at all." He looked wildly about for a means of escape.

Mr. Swain laughed. Few persons had heard him laugh. But there was almost a hearty note now.

"Sit down, Herbert," he said. "Don't you get scared. I understand. That's just what I've been thinking, too. Sorry you saved me, eh? Now you're sorry? So am I. Of course I shouldn't have wanted to stay in the river; but it ought to have happened different; eh, Herbert?"

Herbie stared at him with an expression of bewilderment.

"I guess we're agreed that the accident wasn't good for either of us," went on Mr. Swain.

"People expected me to do something for you, whether you wanted anything or not. People expected you to go to work here; they didn't ask you what you thought. Now, Herbert, we both feel out of place, don't we? We've got to find a way to dissolve partnership, you might say. Don't you think so, Herbert?"

"I dunno," said Herbie, whose mental process was not swift.

"I'll come right to the point. Now, supposing —supposing you were to go out on those logs on the river, and fall in, and I was coming along in the launch and saved you—"

"You wouldn't need to; I kin swim like a fish," suggested Herbie.

"Yes, of course; but, supposing. We're supposing, you know. Good swimmers take cramps, you know. Now, supposing you got a cramp, and couldn't swim; then I would save *your* life. That would even the score, wouldn't it? People would say, 'Herbert Turvey saved Mr. Swain, and Mr. Swain saved Herbert.' They couldn't expect me to do any more; they couldn't expect you to do any more."

"Gee!" said Herbie, scratching his head, "that's a great scheme!"

"Of course you wouldn't need to mention how it happened," added Mr. Swain, thoughtfully.

"No, sir," Herbie promised; "of course I wouldn't."

"Call it to-morrow morning, then, at ten sharp," said Mr. Swain, briskly, as though it were just a bit of regular business. "And you'd better let out a yell or two to attract attention. It won't do any harm if some of the men should see us."

Promptly at ten o'clock the next morning Herbie, in a high state of spirits, made his way out over the logs to the boom which held the struggling captives firm. He gave a tremendous shout, and splashed into the open water. In a moment Mr. Swain's launch chugged along downstream, with the old man in the bow, boathook in hand.

"Grab hold of it!" shouted Mr. Swain, pushing the hook toward the kicking youth. Herbie took it leisurely and caught the point in the top of his trousers.

There was nothing premeditated in the next act of Herbie Turvey. It was a flash of the perverseness, perhaps, that runs throughout human

nature, or possibly just the boy that was uppermost in the man. But whatever was the cause, Herbie could not resist the opportunity offered him. He glanced at the figure of the old man, badly balanced on the edge of the launch, and suddenly dived toward the bottom of the river. There was a yell, and for a second time within a month Mr. Swain was floundering in the water.

Herbie pulled the old man out, and then clambered into the launch himself. Partly from the water in his throat, and partly from the anger that rose and rose within him, Mr. Swain could not say a word. He lay in the bottom of the boat and glared at Herbie horribly.

And Herbie saw what he had done. Before his eyes rose a vision of countless days among detested saws and planers, and stacks of smooth lumber of mountain height. He sat down on one of the cushioned seats, and tears of chagrin began to come into his eyes.

"I've done it now," thought Herbie.

THE NECESSITY FOR REMAINING DEAD

ABOUT half-past eleven on a June night, a north-bound freight kicked an empty box-car into the spur-track at Fairlake, and with its two locomotives shouting out of time, went on up the steep incline to Hodgdon Summit.

The north-bound freight had left something else at Fairlake—a man who stood beside the empty box-car and slapped his clothing and shook himself as though he knew he must be covered with dirt and dust, though in the darkness he could not have seen it.

For two days it had been raining steadily. The sky had cleared at last, and the light of the stars was sufficient to reveal on all sides pools of water and heavy black mud, which sucked at the man's shoes as he waded through it.

Without hesitation, the man picked his way along the edge of the narrow road which led from the railroad tracks up into the village of Fairlake. It was evident that he knew the way.

He passed three or four houses, dark and still, as though uninhabited. Soon the road widened, and sidewalks manifested themselves to his feet. At short intervals there were large trees on each side of the road. It was the conventional approach to a New England village.

The road led into an open space, the usual village common, at one end of which loomed the outlines of a church, with blunt spire reaching above the trees. On both sides of the green there were low buildings, distinct to this man because he knew they were there and what they were. On this open space where he now stood he had played when a boy, before and after school and at the noon recess.

Here was the soldiers' monument, dedicated to those men of Fairlake who had died in the war between the States. On Decoration Day there were memorial services in fair weather at the base of this shaft of granite. He remembered as a boy swinging on the heavy iron chain suspended from four posts about the monument.

There were only two artificial lights to be seen from the square. One was a kerosene lamp in a glass case hung outside the general store. The other was in the rear of the post-office. They

made two spots of yellow in the black shadows of the huge elm-trees. It was all silent, all peaceful: Fairlake was sleeping.

The man walked slowly across the square. At the end farthest from the soldiers' monument, he came upon another shaft of granite, much smaller than the other, but, like it, set off by iron chains. "Hello!" said the man aloud, "here's something new since I was here." He stepped over the chain and ran his hand over that face of the polished granite block toward him. He could feel letters carved in the stone. For a few moments he tried to read the words with his finger tips, as the blind do. He was not adept at that, and could be sure only of a few large letters. Then he found a match, lighted it, and began to read:

IN MEMORY OF

RUFUS OSGOOD

WHO DIED SERVING HIS COUNTRY

A whiff of breeze blew out the match. The man fumbled in his pockets nervously, and found one more—half a match, indeed, but the useful half. He rubbed the head a moment on the lining of his coat, and got another light. In the

moment's flare he saw the words "Philippine Islands," and then the match sputtered out. He had no more matches.

But what he had read was enough. He sat down on the low granite pedestal and expressed his astonishment first by a low whistle and then by an odd collection of oaths, none of which seemed to be directed toward anybody or anything, and all in a voice which showed no resentment or anger.

He fumbled again in his pockets. It was no use. The matches were gone. "Rufus Osgood!" repeated the man. "Died serving his country—Philippine Islands." Then he began to laugh. "There's only one Rufus Osgood ever lived in this town, and that's me!"

What he read on the shaft of stone changed the plans of the man who had come, stowed in the corner of an empty freight car, to revisit the scenes of his childhood and youth. He had had the idea of begging or bulldozing a few dollars and perhaps food and shelter for a time from the people of Fairlake, and then beating his way up the road to a good-sized city, where there was some "excitement."

He had another idea now. He scented bigger game than a dollar or two cajoled, with hard-luck stories, from his former acquaintances. He felt bold enough to go, at this midnight hour, to the house of James Stonehill, the richest and most powerful man in Fairlake, rout him out of bed, and announce himself. He strode across the common, and in a few minutes was at the gate of the Stonehill house. But a recollection of the old man, with shaven upper lip and white chin-beard, flashed into his mind. This old man had once thrashed him with a stout cane. He paused with his hand on the gate. The house was dark, and, as he remembered, forbidding.

"Well," said the man suddenly, "I've got them where I want them. What's the use of being scared of old Stonehill?"

He went up the steps and pulled the bell. He heard the jangling of the bell inside, and stepped back instinctively. There was no immediate reply, and to impress himself with his own boldness he pulled the bell again.

A window above went up, and an impatient voice cried:

"Who's there? What do you want?"

The man below stepped down from under the veranda roof to where he could see something white at a window of the second story. He answered, with a voice not so steady and self-assured as he could wish:

"It's Rufe Osgood."

"You're drunk; get out of here! Go home!" yelled the man above, and slammed the window.

The man below pulled the bell again—pulled it several times. Again the window opened, and this time the voice above was high-pitched and indignant.

"You go along, or I'll make it hot for you."

"My name is Rufus Osgood," said the man below. "You know my voice, Mr. Stonehill. I want to talk to you on important business."

He heard the man above mutter:

"It does sound like Rufe's voice." Then he added, "Wait there a minute, and I'll come down."

Soon through the panes of glass in the front door a light was seen approaching. A bolt was shot back, and the door opened. An old man, half-dressed, raised a kerosene lamp above his eyes and peered out at the visitor. The man outside could not have shown to worse advan-

tage than under this sallow, uncertain light. His week's stubble of beard, his red-lidded eyes, his coat-collar turned up and only half concealing a collarless shirt, and a battered soft hat, combined to present a repulsive figure to the eyes of the man with the lamp.

"Rufe Osgood's dead," said the old man, laconically, without waiting for the other's words.

The reply, "You lie!" sprang naturally to the lips of the man outside; but in his heart he was afraid of this grim old man. He changed it to, "I am Rufe Osgood, Mr. Stonehill. You recognize me, don't you?" Then he added the thought that was just then uppermost in his mind, using it as identification: "You whaled me with a cane once for stealing your apples."

Stoical and undemonstrative as James Stonehill was, he showed the effect that the sudden appearance of Rufus Osgood at his door at midnight produced within him. The hand bearing the lamp trembled somewhat. He coughed nervously. Finally he said curtly, "Come in."

They went into the parlor. Bits of half-dried mud fell from the visitor's filthy shoes. He noticed it, and was surprised to find himself mut-

tering something apologetic about not observing a boot-scraper at the door. It had been a long time since he had apologized for anything to anybody. But he was back in Fairlake now, and generations of careful housewives, abhorrent of unwiped shoes, spoke through him. However, Mr. Stonehill seemed not to hear.

The men sat down facing each other. Osgood, feeling that the burden of proof lay upon him, began, in that declamatory tone which street beggars employ, to identify himself.

The old man stopped him abruptly. "I know you," he said. "I never forget faces. What are you doing here? We thought—"

"I was underground," replied the other, with a grin. "Well, you see I ain't."

"No," said Mr. Stonehill, without relish; "so I see."

"I was reported dead to the War Department, I suppose. The regiment I enlisted in was sent to the Philippines; you know all about that. After we quit fighting the Spaniards, they kept us there chasing the niggers. We had a hot time, my company, in a place called El Buey—that's their lingo for 'bull.' We lost half our men. I don't know just how it happened, but one

of the niggers got me with a bolo—you know what a bolo is? Well, it's a kind of a curved sword. We were fighting in a lot of underbrush. When I woke up there was nobody around. If you don't believe what I'm telling you I'll show you the scar."

"Never mind that," was the reply. "Go on."

"Well, that's about all I've got to say. I'm alive all right; you can see that." He was about to add that he had lived for two years in a Filipino village, but he concluded that that information might entail questions which he had no desire to answer, and he contented himself with saying, "I've come back to see the old place again."

By this time Mr. Stonehill had risen, and was pacing back and forth in front of his visitor, his hands in his trousers pockets, and his head bowed forward in perplexed thought.

"This is a bad mess," he said, half aloud. Then he stopped and faced the visitor. "Of course I'm glad to know that you're safe and sound, Rufe. Of course. I must say, though, that this sudden return of yours places me—or, rather, the trustees of the village—in a predicament. You'll know why at the proper time.

Now, I want you to wait right here while I go out and pull the other two trustees out of bed and bring them here. This is an important matter. I can't handle it alone." He looked at the big old-fashioned clock. "I won't be gone long. Here's a cigar. Don't set the place afire; and don't track that mud around any more than you can help."

The old man went into another room, and soon reappeared, wearing a heavy topcoat. "I'm getting along in years," he said. "I have to be mighty careful about catching cold." At the outer door he paused a moment with his hand on the knob. Then he returned to the parlor and pulled down the roll-top of a desk there, trying it to see if the lock had caught. After a moment's glance about the room he went out.

Rufe Osgood heard the old man's steps grow fainter on the walk in front of the house. He began to laugh aloud. "You'll know why soon enough," he exclaimed, repeating the old man's words. "He thinks I don't know already about that fine monument in memory of Rufus Osgood. This is the best joke I ever heard of."

The man looked about the room with an air of proprietorship. He found a match,

lighted the cigar, and blew the smoke through his nose, appraising the quality.

"A nickel stinker!" he said, laughing. "Just like old Stonehill." But he went on smoking with evident satisfaction.

Then he began to picture the possibilities of his situation. He had the upper hand of the people of the town; no doubt of it. It was in his power to make them the laughing-stock of the whole country. They had erected a monument to a man who wasn't dead, who, in fact, had been "panhandling" in New York at the very moment when they were dedicating the memorial. He would make them sweat. They had never given him a chance when he was a boy. Other boys were encouraged to be somebody. He had been encouraged to be something less than nobody. He had been whipped when other boys had been scolded. He had been scolded when the other boys were laughed at. It was not his fault.

But another very insistent idea kept running through Rufe Osgood's mind. Suppose he should brace up, go to work, and try to be somebody after all? It was coming on haying-time. The ability to swing a scythe was almost a standard

of manhood among the farming people of Fairlake. Even as a boy he had cut as clean a swath as any. He might hire out to a farmer for the summer and fall, and go into the box factory for the winter. There was a good deal more satisfaction, after all, in this life of quiet, hard work, than in bumming about the country as he had been doing. Besides, there was the monument. They must have thought something of him to put that up on the common. It would be a mighty poor return for such kindness to bleed the townspeople of the few dollars he might get.

Rufe Osgood got up and walked about the room. Without knowing it, he was trying to readjust himself to life. He was even trying to live up to the cold granite block out there on the common.

There were footsteps on the front walk. The door opened, and James Stonehill came in, followed by two other men. One was tall, thin-faced, with red hair curled tightly on his head, and a reddish-brown mustache. Rufe remembered him at once—Luther Weatherbee, a good-natured man, fond of playing checkers in the back of the general store. The other man was

thin, too, but short. He had gray, watery eyes, which were now struggling between curiosity and sleep. His name was Robert Rudd. Rufe did not know him; in fact, this man had come to the village since Rufe's enlistment.

"Do you know him?" asked Mr. Stonehill, addressing the tall man, and pointing to Rufe.

"That's Rufe, all right. Hello, Rufe!" exclaimed Mr. Weatherbee, extending his hand in a friendly way. "Glad to see you."

The third man, Rudd, regarded Rufe contemptuously, and just the shadow of a malicious satisfaction showed itself on his face. The reason was evident when he spoke.

"You'll recall, Squire," he said to Mr. Stonehill, "that I wasn't in favor of this monument business from the start. I said it was a waste of money. There's Lake Street, which needs to be widened and filled in. I've seen four teams get mired in that mud-hole near the bridge—"

"I don't see what that has to do with the matter in hand," interrupted the squire, with a frown. "I take it you voted for the memorial."

"Under pressure," replied the other—"under pressure. But I tell you it hurt my feelings to see four hundred dollars—"

"Three hundred and forty," interrupted Mr. Weatherbee.

"—of the taxpayers' money squandered on that tomfoolery. Putting up a monument for —for what? For a man that was deceiving us into believing—"

"Hold on there!" cried Rufe, angrily. "How did I deceive you?"

"That's pretty strong, Rob, I'm afraid," added Mr. Weatherbee. "I can't see how Rufe deliberately deceived anybody."

"Deceived us? Of course he did," insisted Rudd. "We thought he was dead, didn't we? And now he comes sneaking back in the middle of the night, and making a parcel of fools of us. If that ain't deceit, what is?"

"You talk as if I'd have done you a big favor by being really dead," said Rufe.

"I don't wish any man dead," was the reply. "But people officially dead ought to stay dead, I say. The next time I vote for a monument, I want an affidavit from the undertaker. And then I'll vote against it."

"This talk is very well," said Mr. Stonehill, "but you can see that it don't get anywhere. It don't make much difference who was in favor of

the monument and who wasn't. I will say this: I favored it myself. Why? Because Fairlake needed something of that kind. We've got ideals in town, plenty of 'em, but they ain't clear enough. They needed to be fixed on something definite. I figured that the town needed a hero. In the first place, a hero is a good thing for the children. I've no doubt it's done the young folks a heap of good just looking at that memorial. And a monument like that is a business asset, too. I'm a business man, and I know. I've sold more goods out of my store since it went up. It brings money into town. It brings good families, too. Nice people move in where they see a patriotic spirit like that monument shows."

"We already had a big monument to the Civil War," objected Rudd.

"That's true; but you can't go on thinking about the Civil War forever. You've got to get something new. There was a time when people would get excited about Bunker Hill. They don't any more. People want variety, a new hero now and then."

"Well, we got one," said Rudd, with a sour grin. "What are we going to do with him?"

"That's the question," replied the old man.

"Now we're coming to the point. We've got two things to do. One of them is to take down that monument. I don't suppose it would be a dead loss. Perhaps we could sell it to somebody for use in a cemetery. It's good granite; some one ought to want it."

"You can't get much for second-hand stuff," said Rudd, "particularly second-hand monuments, erected by mistake."

Mr. Stonehill turned to Rufe. "I'm going to ask you to step out in the hallway a few minutes," he said. "You can sit down on the stairs." The old man shut the door, and beckoned the other men to move their chairs closer. Then he continued in a low voice: "If it gets out that we have made a mistake in putting up that monument, and have got to take it down and cart it off, we three men, as trustees of the village corporation, will never hear the last of it. You can depend on that; it will follow us to our graves. It'll get into the newspapers, even into the magazines. They'll make jokes about it from one end of the country to the other. And it will hurt the town.

"It will hurt the town in more ways than one —in a business way and in a moral way. They'll

laugh at heroes after this. If you mention patriotism, they'll think right off about that monument to Rufe Osgood, and even the children will hoot at it. Now they've got an ideal. If we have got to smash it, all right; but it will be a long time before they'll believe in another." The squire paused, and looked at Luther Weatherbee. "Do *you* want to take down the monument?"

"No, by gee! I don't, Squire."

"Do you, Robert?"

Mr. Rudd squirmed. "I don't want to have my picture in the newspapers as one of the three biggest fools in the world," he said.

"No, I thought not," said Mr. Stonehill, dryly. "Well, then, there's only one other way to do, and that is to get Rufe Osgood out of this town before daybreak, and keep him out forever. He's got to go away and forget who he is and where he came from. We've seen Rufe. He's a pretty hard-looking object. He's a boozer, I suppose, like his father before him. He probably hasn't seen five dollars for so long he wouldn't recognize it. I think we could make it an object for him to get out of here and stay out. I'd be willing to chip in ten dollars. I know you would, too, Luther; and I suppose, the way

you feel, Robert, you'd rather put in five. Well, twenty-five dollars would be a heap of money to Rufe. He might drink himself to death on it—"

"No such luck," interjected Mr. Rudd.

"The poor devil!" said Luther Weatherbee. "If he could only straighten up!"

"Besides, Squire," added Rudd, "I wonder you don't see the weak spot in your plan, you being a business man. Do you suppose this fellow Osgood would stay away after getting hold of that money? Don't you believe it. He'd be back for more inside of a week, and for more and more. He'd blackmail us, as they say, till we couldn't buy food for our families. He'd regularly live on us. Just think of that a minute."

After a brief silence, Mr. Stonehill leaned back in his chair and sighed heavily. "I dare say you're right, Rob. Something like that did flash across my mind, but I suppose I was so anxious to see a way out of this scrape that I didn't weigh it enough. It looks like we're stuck."

"The trouble is, Squire," said Luther Weatherbee, "that it begins to seem as if we didn't erect that monument to Rufe Osgood at all. I begin to think we just kind of put it up in honor of our-

selves, and, as you said a while ago, for business and moral effect. I'd like to see it stay, though, or else I'd like to get out of town on the early milk-train."

"At least we can bounce that tramp out of town," added Mr. Rudd. "It would look fine, wouldn't it, to have him hanging around, officiating at the tearing-down ceremonies? Oh, this thing makes me sick!"

"The only thing we can do is to get Rufe in here and see how he feels about it," said the squire. He went to the door and threw it open. "Come in, Rufe," he ordered.

Rufe Osgood blinked as he entered the lighted room. He rubbed a dirty hand across his eyes. Despite the invitation to sit down, he remained standing, near the door.

"Rufe," said Mr. Stonehill, "you see how things are. You can gather from what you've heard here that this town has gone and put up a monument inscribed to your memory out there on the common. We had good reason to think that you had fallen in battle. It seems that the only way you've fallen is one where people don't rightly get monuments put up to them. You're a heavy drinker, ain't you, Rufe?"

"I've drunk some," replied the man.

"This ain't no fit place for you, this town, Rufe. As long as you were dead and gone, as we had reason to think, the town was willing to overlook your faults, even to forget all about them. You couldn't expect us to put up with you in your present condition. What did you come poking back here for, anyway? What did you expect to get?"

The man standing at the door tightened his muscles visibly, like a man who is going to take a cold plunge. For the first time he looked the old man in the eyes squarely. In his own eyes there was something weak, hopeless, a little appealing, but, above all, straightforward.

"Mr. Stonehill," he began, "I'll tell you straight. I came here to pick up what I could. I didn't have any regular plans. I struck a freight bound north, and I jumped it. I happened to think there were people here who knew me, and might cough up a few bits of change.

"I saw that monument out on the common. I lit a match to find out what was on it. I knew right off what had happened. Then I came over to your house because I thought you'd be will-

ing to do something for me. I figured out that I could put you people in a hole."

"What did I tell you, Squire!" cried Rudd, exaltingly, forgetting in his eagerness to prove himself right that the squire's discomfiture was also his own.

Just a single ugly look flashed toward Rudd from Rufe's eyes, then he was as before. "Then, Mr. Stonehill, while you went out after these two gentlemen, I got to thinking. First I figured out how much I could get out of it. I tell you right, I didn't have many chances when I was a kid here in this town. I don't remember much encouragement. But, anyway, I got to thinking, too, that I might get a job here, and brace up, and quit bumming around. Well, don't look scared, Mr. Rudd; I ain't going to do it. I forgot for a minute about that monument. Of course I know that wouldn't go at all. But I got kind of mixed, thinking about the two things at once.

"I been out there in the dark, thinking. I never knew how much better a man could think in the dark. I heard one or two things you said when you spoke aloud. I heard what this gentleman said about me coming back for more

money. I can see he ain't no friend toward me, but I'll say for him that he was right: that was one of the ideas that was in my mind. It looked to me like once you begun to give up, you couldn't very well stop.

"Well, let me tell you right now I don't want your money. I've got a bigger idea than that. It came to me all of a sudden out there on the stairs. I said to myself, 'Rufe, you've got the only chance now you ever had. Here's a town full of people, barring three men, who believe in you. They thought once you were no good. Then they changed their minds, or they had 'em changed for them. They think now you were somebody, after all. They've forgotten all about the reputation you had when you lived here. They don't stop to remember that your father was no good, and your mother died when you were a little shaver because he didn't treat her right. Why not leave things as they are?' Well, that's my idea.

"I'll get out of here. It won't need a cent to make me go. I'll be nobody from the time I hit the railroad tracks down below. The people think I was somebody, after all. It ain't so; but it won't hurt 'em. You won't tell them

any different, you three gentlemen, because you've got good reason to keep shut up. Let things be as they are. What do you say?"

There was a moment's pause.

"If we could be sure—" began Mr. Stonehill.

"You can be dead sure. I'll go now before it comes light. What do you say? Will you leave the monument be? Will you let it stay there? Will you let 'em think I was somebody, after all—and that the whole family wasn't rotten and no good?"

None of the three men replied. They looked at each other questioningly. The only affirmative was the lack of any negation.

A look of earnestness showed on Rufe's face.

"I'll get out quick," he said. "Nobody'll see me. If you'd let me have a few matches."

Without a word Luther Weatherbee handed him what he wanted. The outside door opened and closed gently.

The corporation trustees, actuated by a common thought, went to the door, opened it, and looked out. For several minutes they gazed into the darkness of the common. Then a light flickered over at the end where the monument was. Then it was gone.

THE MAN WITH A COUNTRY

UP to the year 1905 William D. Simms had never suspected himself of any unusual oratorical power; nor had he speculated much on national politics or statesmanhood. In that year, somewhat like a retarded flower, he bloomed. He was then thirty-eight years old, a broad-shouldered, ruddy, healthy man, who did no discredit to a Prince Albert coat. The editor of the Leebury *Intelligencer* afterward had occasion to speak of Mr. Simms as "Dantonesque," which, though it did not identify Mr. Simms to any extent, identified the editor of the *Intelligencer* as a well informed man.

In this important year, 1905, William D. Simms was asked to make an address before Valiant Lodge 133, Royal Arcanum, of Leebury. The prospect frightened him a little. He had once recited "The Seminole's Defiance" at Leebury Academy; but thereafter had been absorbed in the management of a prosperous

shingle mill. Under such circumstances most men ask their wives for advice, but Mr. Simms was not married. So he counseled with himself, and resolved to speak.

This address was a profound success. All hitherto unadvertised, Mr. Simms possessed a reverberating baritone voice, which comfortably filled Odd Fellows' Hall and overflowed into the street outside. The title of the address was "Our Flag."

The peroration was notable. It went something like this:

"From the rock-ribbed shores of Maine to the sun-kissed sands of Florida, from the Golden Gate to tempestuous Hatteras, we are one undivided people—one people, one flag. Let us pledge ourselves, at this eventful moment, one and all—"

At this point, from the rear of the hall, a shrill, penetrating voice cried, "Pot!"

Mr. Simms, whose left hand at the moment was upon his breast, and whose right hand was uplifted, index finger foremost, in the general direction of the stars, paused. Then he repeated: "Let us pledge ourselves at this eventful moment—"

Again the acid voice broke in, this time with the monosyllable, "Bunk!"

A murmur of displeasure ran through the audience. Mr. Simms peered down in the direction of the interruption, but the kerosene lamps at the foot of the dais bothered him. He gathered himself together and bellowed: "Fellow citizens, I call upon you to put that man out!"

"I'll go out, and glad of it!" responded the disaffected one at the rear. But willing hands applied themselves to the man before he could act on his resolve; and though many stories were afterward told of the occurrence, the general impression was that Hobbs (the heckler) was pushed to the top of the street stairs, and then pushed once more.

Whereupon, silence being restored, William D. Simms finished his peroration; and the cheering and stamping lasted three minutes.

This remarkable address, and the dramatic incident that attended it, had many important results; but the total effect was this: it fixed permanently, in Leebury, the status of William D. Simms and the status of Elisha Hobbs. From that moment of ejection, Hobbs was a marked man; a sort of traitor, whose only reason for

not having committed overt treason was the lack of opportunity. Some would have excused him on the grounds of intoxication; but it was well known that he did not drink. Others shyly mentioned dyspepsia and its awful ravages on the disposition. This defense failed. Hobbs was written down an enemy of the nation.

William D. Simms was a marked man, too, but in a happier way. He was established as a patriot. All the citizens of Leebury (except Hobbs) were patriots, too; but Simms was articulate, ready, forceful. Simms stood for Liberty and Union. The others were for Liberty and Union; but did not stand.

This was in 1905; a year of consequence in Leebury.

Give a dog a blue ribbon, and he will surely try to live up to it, even though his ancestors erred. The same dog, with a can attached to his tail, will soon show a character warped toward sin. It is likewise with men.

Nobody ever asked Elisha Hobbs to explain this extraordinary conduct at the meeting of Royal Arcanum. Yes, one man did: the janitor of the Public Library. But he got little satisfaction.

"That was a regular rumpus you kicked up the other night," said the janitor.

"Was it?" replied 'Lish, with a queer look in his eyes. That was all; not a bit satisfactory. 'Lish picked up a drawing knife, and the janitor retired from the wheelwright shop precipitately, though the peaceable intention of 'Lish was to shave down a spoke. But that was the way of it. The intentions of the man were constantly suspected. Never a barn burned after that but somebody winked his eye and softly coughed the name of Hobbs. If there had been another wheelwright within fifteen miles, Elisha Hobbs would have got small trade. But bygones are bygones in business, especially when you face a monopoly.

As for William D. Simms, he had sown generously, and he now reaped the blessed harvest. He was in demand as a speaker; spoke to everybody, everywhere. He became arbiter of many disputes, but his specialty was patriotism. It was Simms who planned the Fourth of July celebration at Leebury Common, when all the school children for miles around were grouped in the form of a flag, clad properly to indicate the colors. Simms introduced a flag salute into the

public schools. He gave away patriotic song-books, and the fact that a picture of his shingle mill was printed on the back did not interfere with the central idea. When the flag on the Town Hall got frayed, Simms was asked for advice. Simms was elected First Selectman of the town the following March. People said, "There goes Mr. Simms!" and "Here comes Mr. Simms!" and those close friends who had called him Bill changed it to Will.

William D. Simms was now a man with a country.

They organized the Leebury League, and Simms was the first president. It was a secret society, with inside and outside guards, degree work and passwords; so its purpose and functions were soon common knowledge. The fundamental idea was Patriotism. The Leebury League stood ready to back up anything that the government at Washington might see fit to do. It affected peaceableness, but was ready for war when war should come. Within the league there was a tacit agreement as to what one American could do, in the matter of fighting foreigners.

Each member of the Leebury League wore an

appropriate button, and played a fair hand, at least, at whist or cribbage. It was admitted that the League owed its existence to the patriotism of one man—and that man was Simms.

In 1910, third year of the Leebury League and fifth year since the rise of William D. Simms, an event happened which, obscure and paltry enough at first, gradually led up to a serious condition in the national affairs.

A respectable American sailor, it was reported, had been thrown out of a drinking parlor at Iquique, Chile, reviled by the inhabitants, and left in the street to grow sober without any medical assistance. Other things had occurred in Chile, in the last few years, which made the attitude of that republic extremely offensive to the United States. To name only one affront, a large concession for mining operations had been given to the Belgians, in the face of a strong competition by American citizens.

The American minister made representations at Santiago, demanding an apology. No apology was forthcoming. More representations were made, without result. The minister threatened to withdraw his *exequatur*. The Chilean government permitted him to do so. In Valparaiso

an American acrobat was jeered when he fell from his trapeze in a music hall, and the figure of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was burned in effigy at Antofogasta, under the mistaken impression that the late poet was a prominent contemporary statesman. The difficulty speedily became acute.

At this point in the negotiations the Leebury League passed a vote of confidence in the government, and sent it by telegraph, prepaid, to Washington. Soon afterward, the government at Washington began to take a more decided stand. It was reported daily that the marines were on the move. William D. Simms made an address at Leebury Common and another at Danwick Four Corners the same night, by torchlight. The gist of what he said was this: "We don't want war; but if it should come—"

The superior power of the United States, coupled with this *intransigeant* attitude of the Leebury League and other similar organizations, would undoubtedly have brought Chile soon to terms, but for an unexpected international complication. It was made apparent in a certain discreetly worded diplomatic note that Chile was being supported by no less a power than Ger-

many. Not only that, but secret-service men reported day by day that the arsenals at Culmbach and Munich were working night and day. Further, the Associated Press gained information, through a high government official whose name was for obvious reasons withheld, that Denmark was siding with Germany.

If the attitude of Chile had been offensive, the attitude of Germany became far more so. Some American medical students were expelled from one of the foremost German universities on a trumped-up charge. It was reported, and the truth of the story was not denied, that for years German music teachers had been systematically deceiving and swindling American pupils, by telling them that they had promising voices, when they patently had no such thing.

For once, the expected happened. On the twelfth day of October, 1910, came the now famous call for volunteers. The news was flashed into Leebury when the Leebury League had just gone into executive session and President Simms had led with the ace of hearts. The president dropped his cards upon the table, stood up, and in the serious, compelling voice for which he was now noted, said quietly: "Gentlemen,

this diversion must cease. War has been declared."

Instantly the League rooms were in confusion. Volleys of questions were fired at the president, to which he could only reply, without perturbation: "You know as much as I do about it, gentlemen. I have only the bare announcement. I request you to go quietly to your homes and make such preparations as you think best."

Perkins, foreman at the shingle mill (with whom, however, President Simms, though owner of the mill, democratically associated as an equal), came over to his employer and said, in a voice that shook a little: "I don't suppose there's any need of my coming down to the shop in the morning, Mr. Simms?"

William D. Simms replied immediately: "Certainly you will, Henry. Things will proceed as usual till we find out all the circumstances. You know we have some big orders on hand."

The League dispersed, and William D. Simms walked slowly home, deep in thought. He had been a man with a country since 1905, and each year he had had the country more and more with him. He could not help feeling the burden of it, now. The Call had come. It was his

duty to see that the Call was answered. A mass meeting was absolutely necessary. A mass meeting meant an address, and the man to deliver that address was William D. Simms. When the sun rose next morning, Mr. Simms blew out the lamp, folded up a manuscript, wiped his brow and retired. But he smiled as he retired. For the address was all prepared.

The mass meeting at Leebury brought together more people from the surrounding country than any event since Scribner and Smith's circus pitched its tent near Leebury Common, back in the nineties. Farmers who never were able to get into the village to vote or to go to church suddenly found a way through their chores, and streamed in from all directions. There was a bandstand in the middle of the Common, and on this elevation chairs had been placed for the selectmen, town clerk, several other officials, all with their wives, and the officers of the Leebury League went deep into its treasury to engage the Springhaven Cornet Band, which played from a haywagon near the bandstand.

The meeting had been called for two o'clock, sharp, and actually got started about half-past three, when the town clerk pounded on the rail

of the stand, succeeded in getting approximate quiet from those nearest him, and introduced William D. Simms "to speak on the great national crisis."

William D. Simms rose with the comfortable air of a man who knows what he is going to say, and furthermore knows that he is an old hand at the business and is in no danger of breaking down from over-excitement. He smoothed out the front of his Prince Albert, shook back his cuffs and spoke.

The Patriot spoke for more than an hour. He pointed with pride to the Revolutionary War, the Mexican War, the Civil War, the Spanish War and all other wars that came within the scope of the subject. He desired to know if there was anyone present with a drop of American blood in his veins who did not thrill with the desire to go forth and crush the enemies of the country. If such there was, let him speak up now and say so. Nobody spoke; but there was great applause. The speaker might then take it for granted that one and all were hand and heart with the government in this hour of peril. (Cries of "Yes.")

The speaker had no doubt, he said, that there

would be a mighty struggle; but, he thought, a brief one. The honor of the country was at stake. Was it conceivable that the old spirit of '76 would be lacking now? (Cries of "No," and tremendous agitation.) Did anyone forget Gettysburg? Or Appomattox? Nobody did. It was also clear that the orator had his people well in hand; could sway them as he pleased; could, at the turn of a phrase, set them into the wildest mood for combat, or bring them to tears. William D. Simms knew, as he spoke, that he had never been in better form.

"And now," said the speaker, "what of the Leebury League? You want to know—you have a right to know—what the Leebury League has been doing; what it intends to do."

"Three cheers for the Leebury League!" cried somebody in the crowd, and these were given tumultuously.

William D. Simms bowed. "I thank you for the League," he said. "As president of that organization, I should like to speak for them. We have as yet held no meeting to act upon the matter, but (here he turned to the officers of the League who sat on the platform) I presume they are all of one mind."

The League officers nodded anxiously, and hung upon his words. One of them, Joseph Wells, plucked William Simms by the end of his coat and whispered: "Remember, Will, most of us are married men with children."

"I am empowered to speak for the League," continued the orator. "Let me tell you that the Leebury League will uphold the Federal Government to the bitter end; will give the last degree of confidence to the men at Washington; will spare no energies, to the utmost, to meet this crisis with courage, with fortitude and with strength. The League stands ready, every man, to shoulder a musket and go to the front. The League stands ready to shed the last drop of its blood in the cause. These things the League will do!"

For a few moments the speaker's words were drowned by cheering. The League officers on the platform stood up, and all leaned, as if attracted by a magnet, toward the speaker; and all spoke into his ear at once. William D. Simms was seen to raise his hand benignly, and the officers sat down again.

"These things the League will do," continued

William D. Simms, "and will gladly do. But—it is the sense and belief of the League that the greatest strength lies in reserve. He who puts forth his entire energy at the beginning of the great work will never, in all probability, see the end. So the League believes—and it is the purpose of the League *not to answer the first call for volunteers, but to await a second and more pressing need.* Then, with hearts aflame and naked steel in hand, this body will march to the front!"

The officers of the League, on the platform, looked dazed for a moment, and then began to applaud. It was evident that, without great restraint, they would have thrown themselves upon the speaker and embraced him madly. Other members of the League took up the applause and cheering, and soon the mob was stampeded. The hubbub was terrific. Hats were thrown in the air and recklessly trampled on the ground, though in no case by the owners. Children began to wail, boys cat-called. Never, in the memories of those present, had there been such a scene in Leebury.

William D. Simms smiled blandly upon his audience, bowed and sat down. He had done

his work. He had not carried the burden of his country in vain.

"We have listened to the mighty address by our fellow townsman," said the chairman, "and our hearts respond as one. Only one man could have uttered those impassioned words, and we are grateful to know that man as a friend and brother. We shall now call for volunteer speakers. Let any man say what is next to his heart. Don't be afraid to speak. We are all friends and neighbors."

Very few persons had observed a small, sharp-faced man worming his way through to crowd to the edge of the platform. But he had done this seemingly impossible thing; and now the small man leaped nimbly up from the ground and stood at the side of the chairman. "I'd like to say a few words," he cried, in a thin, shrill voice that was familiar to everybody.

It was Elisha Hobbs.

"Throw him down!" cried somebody. "Don't let him speak!" bawled another man. "Chuck him right off the stand!" another advised.

But now William D. Simms showed the spirit of magnanimity that lay in his breast. He jumped to his feet and with upraised hand

quelled the disturbance. "Let him say what he has to say," he pleaded. "This is no time for animosities. In an hour of need, let everything else be forgotten."

The crowd stood silent, and awaited a declaration from Hobbs. 'Lish stood in thought a moment, and then began.

"I ain't got the gift of oratory," he said, "but I've got something to say, and that's more important, only you folks don't know it. I listened to this here talk by friend Simms, and I enjoyed it, the same as I enjoy good singing. But I tell you, my friends, what we want to do is come down to brass tacks.

"Now I ain't going to pretend that I think the old U. S. is totally right in this matter, because I don't think so. I may be wrong, but as I gather it one of our sailors went and got drunk somewhere down there in Chile and raised a ruction, and got hisself throwed out in the street, like any good bartender ought to do."

An ugly murmur ran through the crowd, and violent hands would have been laid on 'Lish if William D. Simms had not interceded again. The Patriot knew whatever 'Lish said would do no harm.

"This country, as I see it, has been going round with a chip on its shoulder for some time," continued 'Lish, "and between you and me I shouldn't wonder if it was going to be knocked off good and proper. We're due for a fall, just the same as any other over-proud people. But in spite of these being the facts, it comes right down to this: we've got to fight. We've gone and got into the hot water, and we've got to pull ourselves out. Now who's going to do the fighting? Somebody's got to, else we'll get the tar whaled out of us. The League ain't going to fight—*yit.* The world is full of folks that will fight—*but not yit.* Well, I'm going to fight *now,* and have it over with. Darned if it don't go against my grain to shut up shop and take chances on getting all shot up, but it's got to be did. I'm going to enlist to-night, over at Springhaven. Who's going with me? I want all those that are going to step right up here and give me their names."

The unexpected turn of Hobbs's talk stilled the rising tumult. Somebody began clapping hands. All eyes were turned to the sound, and it was seen that the clapper was Pete Dubois, the blacksmith, somewhat the worse for liquor.

Pete strode up to the platform, knocking folks aside as he plowed his way.

"By Gar, I go weet' you, 'Lish," he cried. "We leeck dem dam Jairmans an' grab Awl-sawce-Lorraine away from dem."

"Number one," said 'Lish.

Next came Giuseppe Capodilupo, the cobbler. He was a swarthy little man, all enthusiasm and physical movement. He wriggled through the crowd, and was hauled up on the platform by Pete Dubois.

There was a pause and much talk. Then Kasan, a Russian Jew peddler, who was accustomed to make the round of the surrounding villages in his wagon, swapping tinware for old rags and rubbers, amazed the people by stepping forward.

"Good for you, Abe!" cried 'Lish.

At this point two grammar school boys, about seventeen years old, leaped up on the platform. They were immediately collared and dragged down by their respective fathers, however, and instead of marching off to war they were marched home to supper.

After this there were no more volunteers. Joe Stearns, the one-eyed grocer's clerk, signified

his intention of volunteering, but it was generally concluded that he was playing to the gallery, knowing that his physical disability would protect him against being taken at his word.

"All here!" announced 'Lish Hobbs dryly. "First train in the morning, boys—and don't back out. And don't be afraid of anything happening to the town while we're gone. The League will take good care of it."

After that the meeting dispersed. There was a chilliness in the air—a certain unexpressed disquiet—that terminated the affair rather differently from what William Simms had planned. Yet many men (and all the members of the League, of course) came up and shook hands with him, and thanked him for his public service. To the most favored of them Mr. Simms confided this thought: *"The first call always takes the scum."*

There was no war. It will be necessary to relate how the country was inflamed with the spirit of battle and how that inflammation was allayed; how the afternoon newspapers secured the most exclusive misinformation at enormous expense; how innocent workmen were arrested

as spies, and condemned to have their pictures published every day for a week; how Gen. Julius B. Hornblade sold a number of articles on "The Strategy of the Battle of Bunker Hill" at thirty cents a word; how the moving-picture operators risked neck and limb at the drills of awkward squads; how the price of picture postcards rose to ten cents apiece; and how the price of kerosene oil was lifted—and never lowered again.

All this had now passed into history, and the month afterward found the most prominent position of the first pages of the newspapers given up to a story of how Elsie Janis came to go on the stage. Only the pensions remained.

The matter was settled by an agreement between the United States and Germany. By this arrangement the United States was to have a solid interest in the Chilean nitrate fields, and Germany was to supply, in perpetuity, all the naval armaments used by the Chilean government. Chile thus emerged with her honor intact.

Elisha Hobbs, Pete Dubois, Abe Kasan and Giuseppe Capodilupo spent three weeks at Charleston, S. C., and were then dismissed from further duty.

The four volunteers came back to Leebury.

There was a slight, ineffectual talk of receiving them with a band when they arrived; but the war spirit had waned too much. So they came home to no music; only a few idlers and schoolboys being at the railroad station when the train pulled in. 'Lish reopened his wheelwright shop; Giuseppe went back to cobbling shoes; Abe's horse had died in the meantime, and he had to return to the pack; and another and more reliable blacksmith had usurped Pete Dubois's place.

'Lish Hobbs was silent, but he was watchful to see whether public sentiment had changed toward him. He had ambitions. The town elections were not far away, and 'Lish believed that he could, on the strength of his volunteer service, wrest the selectmanship from William D. Simms. What made him more and more certain of this was the demeanor of the people toward him. Those who had snubbed him, after his interpellation in 1905, now granted him at least polite recognition; while those who had turned from him somewhat less, now showed cordiality.

There is no man but has a few admirers. Even in his lowest days, 'Lish had friends who stayed

by him, believed in him and accepted his views. There were about eight or ten of those followers. In February, less than a month before town meeting, 'Lish stirred himself among this little host, with the result that he announced himself a candidate for the office of First Selectman. The announcement was published in the Leebury *Intelligencer* as follows:

For First Selectman

VOTE FOR

ELISHA HOBBS.

He went; others stayed at home.

There was no need of embellishing this reference. It was perfectly understood to be the beginning of the undermining of William D. Simms.

The proprietor of the newspaper beseeched Mr. Simms to reply to the libel with a half-page broadside in poster type (at regular political advertising rates), but without avail.

"I will not dignify him with a reply," said Mr. Simms. "When the time comes, I shall speak."

The next issue of the *Intelligencer* contained

another advertisement of 'Lish's candidacy; this time slightly varied:

For First Selectman
VOTE FOR
ELISHA HOBBS.
He shouldered a gun; others talked.

Once more William D. Simms was begged to do something. Several of his closest friends (among them the corresponding secretary of the Leebury League) came to him and earnestly advised action. "'Lish is making converts every day," they said. "Of course we know he isn't much good, but his advertisements are creating an impression."

"Let him go ahead," replied William D. Simms placidly. "I'll attend to him when the time comes." The Patriot could not be persuaded to say a word in his own behalf.

In truth, so sure of his power did Mr. Simms feel that he made no preparation for the town elections. It was whispered about that 'Lish was preparing a red-hot speech to be delivered at the Town Hall in March. It was said that every once in a while, in his shop, he would drop his

tools, seize a pencil and jot down something in a memorandum book; and this "something" was pretty clearly germane to the election. William D. Simms heard the gossip and smiled a superior and confident smile.

To his faithful little circle Elisha Hobbs hinted that he was gathering material for a speech that would be remembered. "There ain't going to be anything flowery about it," said 'Lish, "but just plain hard everyday facts, the kind that will make our folks sit up and take notice."

That March town meeting in Leebury was a fit conclusion to the excitement of the last twelve months. A heavy snow had fallen a few days before, and got well packed down for good sledding. Consequently men came in from the outskirts that seldom were seen at town meeting. 'Lish counted especially on these rurals. The members of Leebury League he could not expect to win; but he felt that solid truth would impress the outlanders.

It was perfectly understood that the meeting would take the form of a joint debate between William D. Simms and Elisha Hobbs. When the moderator called the meeting to order the hall

was jammed to the doors with voters and spectators.

Those who were nearest to 'Lish said afterward that when he rose to speak he had a kind of wolfish glare in his eyes, and that his shrill voice cut the heavy atmosphere like a keen blade.

"My friends," he began, "as I have said before, I ain't got any oratorical gift. I leave that ornamental hinky-dink business to others. I'm running for First Selectman of this town, and I want your votes, and that's what I'm going to talk for. . . ."

In that strain, frank and acid, 'Lish recounted something of the recent events. He did not fail to point out the pretensions of patriotism made by the Leebury League and William D. Simms in particular; he coined the bitter epithet "Second Call Men" in reference to these; and got a loud laugh by shouting that when men were wanted to go to the front, the Leebury League, including William D. Simms, "went to the back!"

"I don't pretend we did any fighting," he said, "but we were there in case there was any fighting to be did; and where was William D. Simms?" 'Lish waited for the question to sink in, and then replied, in his shrillest: "At home."

At precisely half past eleven, to the accompaniment of much handclapping and cheering from his side of the house, William D. Simms rose to speak. His hair was brushed back in thick waves, displaying to the most advantage his high forehead; with a low collar, a simple black ribbon tie, in the manner of the old statesman, a long, new Prince Albert, with the Leebury League button defiantly in the buttonhole, William D. Simms looked every inch the orator he was. As he raised his hand for attention, a hush fell upon the house.

William D. Simms had made no preparation; such was his scorn of Hobbs. After breakfast that morning he had smoked a cigar and ruminated upon the matter in hand. Then he went to his desk and rummaged among a bundle of old patriotic addresses, finally choosing the one marked "Royal Arcanum, 1905." He read it over, and it pleased him. "I couldn't do a bit better to-day," he said to himself.

Thus, at eleven thirty, in town meeting assembled, the citizens of Leebury heard the rich baritone of Simms begin: "Fellow Citizens and Friends."

It was the same address, word for word, that

some of those present had heard in 1905; and they rose to it. People like to hear things with which they are already familiar—about which all necessary thinking has already been performed—old music, old sermons, old speeches.

The beautiful voice of William D. Simms rolled through the hall, billow after billow. Each apostrophe was greeted with murmurs of delight. Each period brought forth a mighty cheer. And then came the peroration:

"From the rock-ribbed shores of Maine to the sun-kissed sands of Florida, from the Golden Gate to tempestuous Hatteras, we are one undivided people—one people, one flag. Let us pledge ourselves, at this eventful moment, one and all—"

The vote for First Selectman was: William D. Simms, 414; Elisha Hobbs, 12.

Not long afterward William D. Simms was elected to the Governor's Council; and thereafter was always addressed as "Colonel Simms."

L'ENVOI: NO-TIME

DOESN'T it seem remarkable that, of the 150,000 physicians who are writing prescriptions in this United States, not one has ever accurately diagnosed the trouble of the Average Man? Isn't it worthy of comment that it should remain for a mere layman like unto myself to do it? It does. It is.

Well, the trouble with the Average Man, then, is not hookworm. It is not pellagra. It is not cholera infantum, or beri-beri, or arteriosclerosis, or any of those things that the sons of Æsculapius have been manfully guessing. The trouble with the Average Man is No-Time. Or, to give it the benefit of its ancient name, "tempus fugit."

Consider the tired business man. He has No-Time. He has no time to eat, no time to sleep, no time to think. Remark the little printed cards which are tacked on the wall of his office: "Do it NOW." "I am BUSY; Are You?" He thinks those little sayings are the 'cutest imaginable. He thinks the man who invented them must have

been looking in his direction as he wrote. He prides himself on the fact that he never, never has any time. Pretty soon he will not have time enough to do business. Pretty soon after that he will be dead. Then he will have time to burn.

Consider the party in the automobile being jounced along a country road at the rate of fifty miles an hour. They have No-Time. There is autumn fire upon the hillsides. They do not see it. They have no time. The road skirts a little lake, hedged in by balsam and birch. Do they admire? No. They have no time. They are in a hurry. Why? To get where they are going. And then what? Then they will wonder what in the world they are going to do to kill time until dinner. And the matter with these people? No-Time.

Consider the man who always signs his letters "In Haste." Is he in haste? He thinks he is. Why does he think he is in haste? He has No-Time. Then why did he write a letter at all? Oh, perhaps just to show how little time he has for letters. Soon somebody will be writing his letters for him. Soon he will be sending night-telegrams. A little while after that, and his will goes to the probate court. Then he will have

plenty of time. Then the legatees will have No-Time.

Consider the man who rushes madly into the Subway train, leaving a wake of crushed and indignant people behind him. Is that the last train? No; there is a train every two minutes. Then why this mad activity? He has No-Time. He wants to get home, quick. Why does he want to get home? Oh, just to be home. In the morning he will want to get to the office, quick. Why? Oh, because he wants to be at the office. Would the office be there ten minutes later? Yes. The office will continue to be at that spot long after he discontinues coming downtown. Does he ever think of that? No. He has No-Time.

Consider with me this peculiar disease, No-Time. No time to be courteous; no time to see one's friends; no time to write home to the folks who live out in the country and have plenty of time; no time to read anything but the daily newspaper, which has no time to print anything worth reading; no time to talk of anything except things which are not worth talking about; no time to think of anything except that there is no time to think of anything; no time to walk,

no time to play, no time to exercise until the doctor says it is imperative—

And then no time to do anything else; time to be an automaton, time to be an ineffectual; no time to be a human being; no time to imitate one. The universe has time. The world has time. The trees have time. The grass has time. A squirrel has time. Disease has time. The Average Man has No-Time.

With some exceptions. The physician has time. The apothecary has time. The undertaker has time. They have time for the man who has No-Time.

THE END